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1988 High School Graduate Survey

Main Report
October, 1989

Alberta
ADVANCED EDUCATION

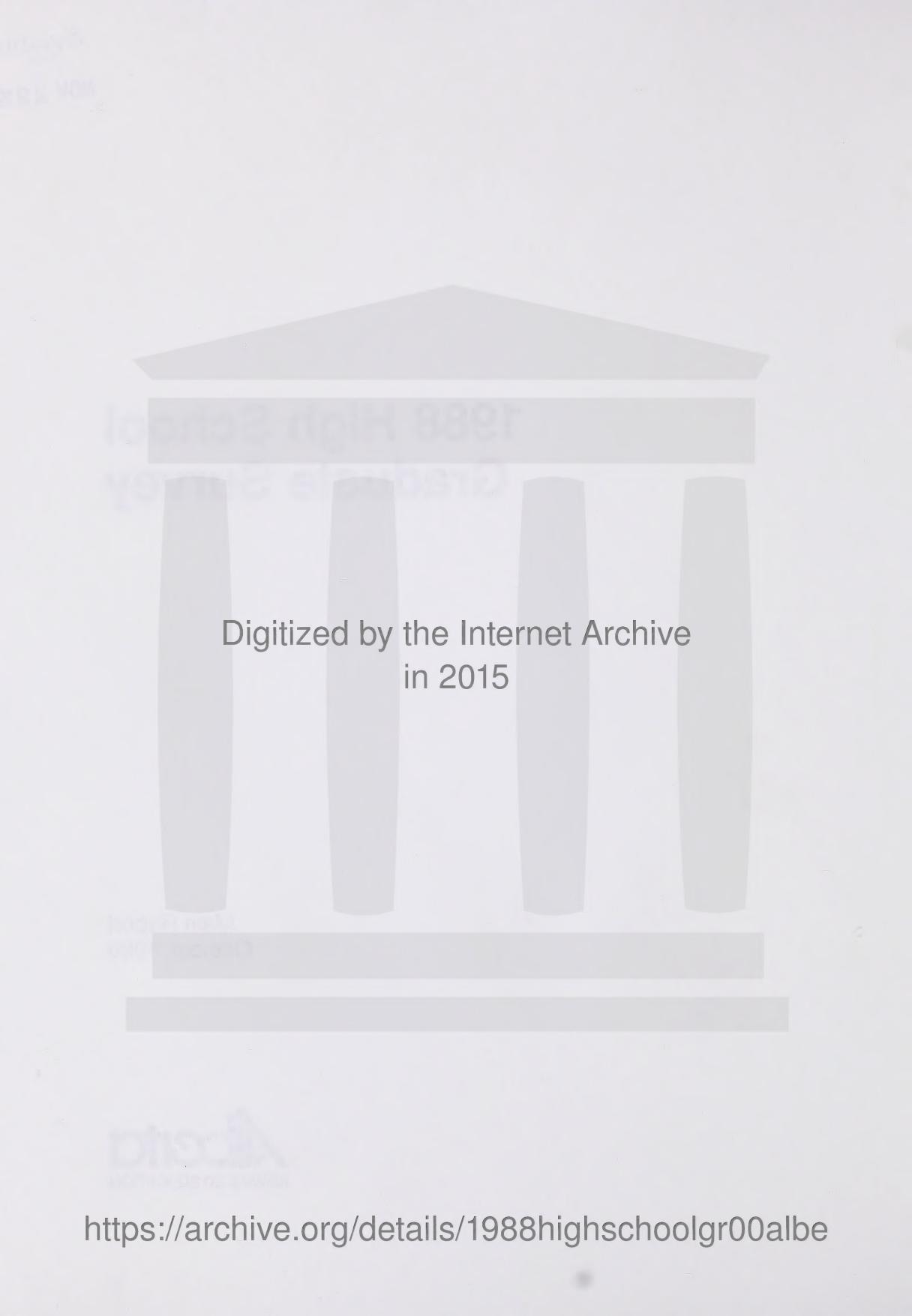
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our thanks to Alberta Education for their contributions to the 1988 High School Graduate Survey. Foremost among these contributions was the generation of our sample and the provision of the mailing lists that were required in order to contact the graduates. Without the cooperation of Alberta Education, it would not have been possible to obtain a random sample of Alberta high school graduates.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the graduates who responded to our survey. Their cooperation represents the most important element in the success of this project. By taking the time to respond to our survey, they allowed us to gain insights into the experiences and plans of recent Alberta high school graduates. The information they provided will play an important role by assisting educational planners in making decisions about post-secondary education in Alberta.

Well over half of all recent Alberta graduates surveyed had completed their post-secondary education by the time of the survey.

Another 30% of the graduates surveyed were still in post-secondary education at the time of the survey.

While high school graduates were less likely than university students to have completed postsecondary education by the time of the survey, this difference was not statistically significant.

Graduates planned to attend postsecondary education prior to entering high school. Thus, the 1988 High School Graduate Survey included students in both secondary and postsecondary education at the time of the survey (see Table 1).

The highest tier graduates rated their ability to achieve their educational and career goals as comparable to that of the lowest tier graduates. In addition, they had no intention of furthering their postsecondary education during the year 1988/89.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December of 1988, Alberta Advanced Education conducted a survey of recent Alberta high school graduates in order to collect information on the post-secondary educational experiences, plans and career aspirations of high school graduates.

A stratified random sample of 1,250 graduates was selected from the population of 21,905 secondary students who received an Alberta high school diploma between September 1, 1987 and August 31, 1988. A total of 780 graduates responded to the survey. When we adjusted for graduates who could not be located, and for errors in our sample, the return rate was 65.1%.

The following are highlights of the survey results.

PART I - PARTICIPATION IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Well over half (57.9%) of the recent Alberta high school graduates surveyed had continued their education full-time in a post-secondary institution (page 6).

Another 4.0% of the graduates entered post-secondary institutions on a part-time basis and 10.4% had returned to high school (page 6).

Older high school graduates were less likely to continue their education full-time in post-secondary institutions than were graduates of average high school leaving age. However, this was true among matriculants only (page 8).

Educational plans in Grade 12 corresponded quite well to educational participation after high school. A full 80.6% of those who had planned to continue their education in Grade 12 were enrolled full-time in post-secondary institutions at the time of the survey (pages 10-11).

The higher the graduates rated their ability to achieve their education and career goals in comparison to that of their Grade 12 classmates, the more likely they were to continue their education full-time in post-secondary institutions (pages 11-12).

Over three-quarters (77.1%) of the matriculants entered post-secondary institutions on a full-time basis, as compared to 36.6% of the non-matriculants (page 13).

The higher the high school grades of the graduates, the more likely they were to enter post-secondary institutions on a full-time basis. The most dramatic increase in the percentage of graduates continuing their education occurred once grades reached 70% and over (page 13).

Among graduates who entered post-secondary institutions on a full-time basis, the top three factors selected as most important in the decision to continue their education were: "It is necessary in order to have the career I have chosen" (39.6%); "It would help my chances of finding a job" (23.2%); and, "I simply wanted more education" (13.4%) (page 15).

The large majority (78.3%) of those who didn't pursue post-secondary education on a full-time basis indicated that they did plan to do so at some point in the future. About two-thirds (64.8%) of this group thought that they would continue their education on a full-time basis within one year (page 18).

PART II - PROGRAMS AND INSTITUTIONS

Among the graduates who continued their education full-time in post-secondary institutions, 44.9% were attending universities, 39.3% were in colleges (including technical institutions), 7.2% were in other types of Alberta schools, and 8.6% were attending post-secondary institutions outside of the province (page 20).

Older graduates were less likely to be attending university than were graduates of average high school leaving age (pages 22-23).

Among those graduates who continued their education, the higher they rated their ability to achieve their education and career goals in comparison to that of their Grade 12 classmates, the more likely they were to be attending university (page 24).

Among those who entered post-secondary institutions on a full-time basis, those with Grade 12 grades of 70% or over were much more likely to be attending university than those with lower grades (page 26).

The top three factors selected by graduates as being the most important in their choice of post-secondary institution were: "The program I wanted was offered there" (26.5%); "It has a good reputation and/or facilities" (20.9%); and, "It was close to home" (20.6%) (pages 27-28).

The factors most commonly selected as being the most important in the choice of post-secondary program were "Personal interest" (45.8%) and "It prepares me for the career that I want" (22.9%) (page 29).

Over one-quarter (28.8%) of those who continued their education full-time in post-secondary institutions had applied to more than one Alberta institution, and 14.9% had applied to more than one program of study at the institution they are presently attending (pages 30-31, 34).

PART III - ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Among those who did not continue their education full-time in a post-secondary institution, the top factors selected as being most important in the decision not to pursue their education were: "I needed a break from school" (18.4%); "I wanted to earn money" (15.9%); and "I needed to return to high school to improve my grades" (14.1%) (pages 37-38).

A wide range of information sources about post-secondary education was used by graduates, the most common being high school guidance counsellors, special events, and parents and family members. Although guidance counsellors were the most utilized source of information, the information they provided was often not useful or appropriate in the graduates' view (page 40).

Among those graduates who entered post-secondary institutions on a full-time basis, the most frequently used sources of financing were parents or family (71.2%) and savings and summer jobs (68.6%) (page 42).

Graduates from the Edmonton and Calgary areas were less likely to use student loans, government grants, bursaries, and allowances than graduates from other areas of Alberta. Conversely, they were more likely than graduates from other areas of Alberta to

have used income from part-time jobs to finance their post-secondary education (page 43).

Almost one-quarter (23.2%) of the graduates indicated that they had repeated one or more high school courses in order to improve their Grade 12 grades. Half (50.7%) said that they had taken additional high school courses over and above the requirements for their diploma (page 44).

The most common reason identified by graduates for both repeating courses and for taking additional high school courses was "To improve my chances of being accepted by a post-secondary institution" (pages 47, 49).

Family encouragement to enrol in higher education, the educational participation of older siblings, and parents' education were all positively related to the likelihood of graduates continuing their education full-time in a post-secondary institution. However, once graduates made the choice to enter higher education, family background had less of an influence on the type of institution graduates attended. Only parents' education played a significant role in the type of institution attended (pages 50-55).

Family background also had an indirect influence on the post-secondary educational participation of graduates through its positive influence on the likelihood of attaining matriculation status and high Grade 12 grades (pages 55-59).

As expected, those who graduated from areas other than Edmonton and Calgary were found to be less likely to have a post-secondary institution in the area of their parents' home than were graduates from Alberta's two largest centres. However, not having a post-secondary institution in the vicinity of one's parents home did not influence the likelihood of graduates continuing on with their education after high school (page 60).

PART IV - CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Only two-thirds (64.9%) of the graduates had specific career aspirations which could be coded into an occupational field. Another 11.4% had plans for the future, but they couldn't be coded into traditional occupational categories. The remaining

23.7% of graduates did not have any specific career aspirations (pages 62-63).

Females were more likely than males to be undecided about a future career, and those who did not continue their education full-time in a post-secondary institution were more likely to express career indecision than those who did (pages 64-65).

Among those graduates who had specific occupational aspirations, Managerial and administrative occupations were the most popular choice (17.0%). This was followed by occupations in medicine and health (14.8%) and occupations in the natural sciences, engineering, and mathematics (14.0%) (pages 66-67).

The percentages of graduates aspiring to various occupational fields differed by gender, and to a lesser degree by whether or not respondents continued their education full-time in a post-secondary institution (pages 66-67).

The career aspirations of graduates also differed from the actual distribution of occupations in the paid Canadian labour force (page 67).

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INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen a number of changes affecting post-secondary education in Alberta. The demand for higher education has increased despite a decline in the population of 18-24 year olds. In the early to mid-1980s this increased demand was attributed to an economic downturn. However, the persistence of this high demand into the late 1980s, a period of economic recovery, suggests that this explanation alone does not suffice. It is likely that other factors such as the requirements of an advanced technological society and fundamental changes in attitudes towards post-secondary education are serving to maintain the high level of demand for higher education in Alberta.

In any case, the greater number of people with post-secondary education has resulted in a labour market in which post-secondary education has increasingly become necessary in order to compete for available opportunities. At the same time, some Alberta post-secondary institutions began to implement stiffer entrance policies in order to limit enrolments. As a result of all of these changes, recent high school graduates face a transition out of high school that is far different from that faced by earlier generations.

Information on the post-secondary educational experiences and plans of recent high school graduates is essential for post-secondary educational planning since this group forms the largest pool of entrants into higher education. In order to monitor the effect of recent change on the experience of high school graduates in the current post-secondary system, Alberta Advanced Education conducted a province-wide survey of 1988 high school graduates. The survey collected information on the post-secondary educational experiences, plans, and career aspirations of these recent graduates. It is hoped that the results presented in this report will aid people involved in post-secondary education, especially in the institutions, in making decisions regarding post-secondary education in Alberta.

METHODOLOGY

Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 1,250 graduates from the population of 21,905 secondary students who received an Alberta high school diploma between September 1, 1987 and August 31, 1988. In order to obtain a sample which was representative of all Alberta high school graduates during this period, the sample was divided into twelve strata based on combinations of three criteria: Edmonton area, Calgary area or other Alberta areas; matriculation or non-matriculation status; and gender.¹ The size of the subsamples selected in each of the twelve strata reflected the proportion of that group in the total population of all 1988 Alberta high school graduates. Since methods for random probability sampling were followed, all the graduates within each strata had an equal opportunity of being selected.

On December 8, 1988 a self-administered questionnaire was mailed to the 1,250 high school graduates selected in our sample. In order to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of individual respondents, the names of the graduates did not appear anywhere on the questionnaire. Respondents advised us that the questionnaire had been returned by mailing back a separate postcard indicating that they had replied. On January 19, 1989 the questionnaire mailout was followed up with a reminder letter for those graduates who had not yet indicated to us by postcard that they had responded. Non-respondents in the four strata with the lowest response rates received a second letter on February 1, 1989.

Questionnaires were received up to and including our April 4, 1989 deadline for returns. In total, 780 respondents returned a useable, completed questionnaire. This represents an unadjusted response rate of 62.4%. When the sample size is adjusted to take into account those we could not locate (49 returned to sender) and those not in the sample (2 were not 1988 graduates, 1 was deceased), the adjusted response rate was 65.1%. The adjusted

¹ Matriculation status was calculated by Alberta Education and does not correspond exactly to the type of diploma reported by the graduates. Thus, the correlation between the two is not perfect, especially among non-matriculants, many of whom reported having advanced diplomas (26.4%) when they responded to the survey.

response rate in individual strata ranges from lows of 52.1% and 53.3% from Edmonton area and Calgary area male non-matriculants respectively, to highs of 74.7% and 75.0% from Edmonton area and Calgary area female matriculants.

As a result of the different response rates from various groups, our sample is slightly biased towards matriculants, and to a lesser degree females. Despite these slight biases, our return percentages on the three sampling criteria of gender, matric/non-matric, and region are very close to the percentages sampled, based on the actual proportions in the population (see Table A.3, Appendix A). Therefore, we can be reasonably assured that our sample is still fairly representative of the population of 1988 high school graduates. Nevertheless, any generalizations to the population of 1988 high school graduates should be taken as approximations only. The criteria we used to identify statistically significant relationships are described in Appendix B, and the survey instrument is presented in Appendix C.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

Despite the slight biases noted in the methodology section, our sample of 780 respondents still reflects a fairly accurate representation of the population of 1988 high school graduates on our three sampling criteria of region, matriculation status and gender. This section presents a more detailed descriptive look at the characteristics of our sample. Table 1, presented below, shows the percentage of respondents in each of our twelve sampling strata.

TABLE 1
SAMPLING STRATA PERCENTAGES

Sampling Strata	Frequency	Percent
A - Edmonton area, Matriculant, Males	67	8.6%
B - Edmonton area, Matriculant, Females	74	9.5%
C - Edmonton area, Non-Matriculant, Males	49	6.3%
D - Edmonton area, Non-Matriculant, Females	57	7.3%
E - Calgary area, Matriculant, Males	61	7.8%
F - Calgary area, Matriculant, Females	69	8.8%
G - Calgary area, Non-Matriculant, Males	48	6.2%
H - Calgary area, Non-Matriculant, Females	73	9.4%
I - Other Alberta, Matriculant, Males	64	8.2%
J - Other Alberta, Matriculant, Females	76	9.7%
K - Other Alberta, Non-Matriculant, Males	70	9.0%
L - Other Alberta, Non-Matriculant, Females	72	9.2%
TOTAL	780	100.0%

When the returns in each of the twelve sampling strata are collapsed into region, matriculation status, and sex, we find that 31.7% of our respondents are from the Edmonton area, 32.2% are from the Calgary area, and 36.2% are from other areas in Alberta. Slightly over half of the respondents (52.7%) graduated with a matriculation diploma, versus 47.3% who were non-matriculants. Finally, 54.0% of the respondents were female and 46.0% were male.

We were also able to derive the age of the respondents at graduation from their birthdates. We did this by subtracting the respondents' year of birth from 1988, the year of graduation.

The result gives us an approximate measure of age at the time of high school graduation. Using this measure we found that the average age at high school graduation was 18.4 years. While the large majority of respondents were 17 or 18 years old (about 78%), there were also some adults ages 19-44. Approximately 14% of the sample were 19 years of age and 6% were 20 years of age or older.

PART I
PARTICIPATION IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

One of the most salient issues for post-secondary educational planners is the overall participation rate in post-secondary education. Many of the more specific concerns regarding higher education actually fall under this umbrella. As such, it is important to have an understanding of not only the overall participation rate, but of the factors influencing it. By far, the largest pool of post-secondary entrants comes from recent high school graduates. This section of our report examines the participation in post-secondary education of this group.

A. Continuation of Education Following High School Graduation

1. What percentage of Alberta High School students continue their education directly after graduation?

Our survey was timed so that we could gauge the participation rate in post-secondary education directly following high school. Although our sample of graduates was drawn from the population of those receiving high school diplomas between September 1, 1987 and August 31, 1988, most of these people would have graduated in the early summer of 1988, with the next most frequent date of graduation being January, 1988. Therefore, our December, 1988 survey gives an estimate of the participation rate in post-secondary education of very recent recipients of Alberta high school diplomas.

We found that 57.9% of our respondents were continuing their education full-time in post-secondary institutions.² Out of this group, 91.4% were in post-secondary institutions in Alberta. Only 8.6% of those who continued their education went out of province to do

² This figure actually underrepresents the educational participation of recent high school graduates. In addition to those who continued their education full-time in a post-secondary institution, another 4.0% of our sample entered post-secondary institutions on a part-time basis and 10.4% returned to high school. This means that almost three-quarters (72.3%) of our sample of recent high school graduates continued their education in some form.

so. These results indicate that the demand for post-secondary education in Alberta is still very high. Many researchers have attributed the high levels of demand for post-secondary education in the mid-1980s to an economic downturn. However, the continuation of high levels of demand in the late-1980s, a period of economic recovery, indicates that the demand for post-secondary education could remain high due to other factors such as changes in attitudes and the demands of an advanced technological society.

2. What factors influence the likelihood of continuing education after high school?

a) Demographic and Individual Academic Background Factors

When we begin to further explore participation in post-secondary education in order to see exactly who continues their education, it becomes apparent that the likelihood of continuing one's education is not a random phenomenon. Demographic characteristics and individual academic background factors are related to participation rates. The following analysis summarizes the relationship between these factors and the likelihood of continuing one's education.

i) Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics we examined include region, age, and gender. The relationships identified between these factors and whether or not respondents continued their education indicated that only age had a significant influence on the likelihood of continuing education. Table 2 shows the form of this relationship.

TABLE 2
CONTINUATION OF EDUCATION BY AGE GROUP

	Age	
	Youth 17-18 years	Adults 19 years and over
Continued Education	61.7%	43.7%
Did Not Continue Education	38.3%	56.3%
Total Number*	(606)	(158)

* Numbers in brackets represent the raw number of sample respondents who fit into each column of the table. They will be presented for all crosstabulation tables throughout the report.

As can be seen from Table 2, 61.7% of those who were 17-18 years old when they graduated from high school went on to continue their education full-time in a post-secondary institution.

This compares to only 43.7% of those who were 19 years of age or older. We chose to divide the age groups in this manner in order to determine if there was a difference between young people of average high school completion age and older students, many of whom may have returned to high school after an absence to upgrade to diploma status. Our results confirmed what we expected; older high school leavers are less likely to continue their education in post-secondary institutions than young people of average high school leaving age.

The finding that younger graduates were more likely to continue their education was found to hold for both males and females when each group considered separately.³ The pattern of the

³ Most of the findings in this report have been examined to see if they also hold separately among each region, among both matriculants and non-matriculants, and for both males and females. When we report that the relationships we identified

relationship also held among all three regions surveyed (Edmonton area, Calgary area, and other Alberta), although the differences between the two age groups were significant only in Calgary. We also checked to see whether or not the relationship held among both matriculants and non-matriculants. The results indicated that the relationship held for matriculants only. Age did not have a significant influence on the likelihood of continuing education for non-matriculants.

We also re-examined the effects of region and gender on the continuation of education among various subgroups. Even though these factors did not influence the likelihood of continuing education for the total group, it is possible that they may have an effect among certain segments of high school graduates. Our results indicated that this was indeed the case. Region had an influence on continuing education for males. Calgary area males were more likely than males from either Edmonton or other Alberta to continue their education. Almost 68% of Calgary area males went on to post-secondary education. This compares to a continuation rate of approximately 50% among males in the rest of Alberta.

In the case of gender, it had a significant influence on continuing education among non-matriculants. Female non-matriculants are more likely to continue their education (41.6%) than male non-matriculants (30.5%). Gender also had a significant influence on continuing education

also hold among these subgroups, it must be understood that this does not mean that the pattern and the strength of the relationship in each of the subgroups is exactly the same. It means only that the particular influence we are examining has a statistically significant effect in the same direction as that found among the total group, such as younger female graduates being more likely to continue their education than older female graduates.

in the "Other Alberta" region. Among graduates who did not live in either of Alberta's major centres, females were more likely to continue their education (64.2%) than males (49.3%). This supports commonly held perceptions that males in rural areas are the least likely of all graduates to opt for higher education.

ii. Individual Academic Background Factors

The academic background characteristics that we examined included the respondents' plans in Grade 12, educational plans of classmates, self-concept of ability, whether or not graduates talked with a high school guidance counsellor, matriculation status, type of diploma, and grades. Not surprisingly, all of these factors, with the exception of classmates' educational plans, were significantly related to the continuation of education.

As expected, one of the strongest factors relating to whether or not graduates continued their education were their own educational plans. Respondents were asked to identify what their plans were in Grade 12 for the year following graduation. We then collapsed their answers into two categories (continue education and other), in order to compare educational plans with actual educational behavior.

TABLE 3
CONTINUATION OF EDUCATION BY EDUCATIONAL PLANS

	Educational Plans in Grade 12	
	Continue Education	Other
Continued Education	80.6%	16.6%
Did Not Continue Education	19.4%	83.4%
Total Number	(504)	(271)

As can be seen from Table 3, plans and actual behavior corresponded quite well; 80.6% of those who had planned to continue their education actually did so. This compares to a continuation rate of only 16.6% among those who had other plans for the year following high school. Acknowledging the fact that the strength of the relationship is probably somewhat inflated because respondents were asked their Grade 12 plans in retrospect, the results still indicate that the vast majority of Alberta high school graduates follow through with their plans for the future.

In addition to being asked their educational plans, graduates were also asked about their level of confidence in their own academic ability. Two measures of what researchers commonly refer to as "self-concept of ability" were included in our survey. The responses to these questions indicated that recent Alberta high school graduates are very self-confident; 82.0% of them said that they were confident in their ability to achieve their education and career goals. In addition, 65.4% of them said that in comparison to others in their Grade 12 class, their ability to achieve their goals is better than average or much better than average. None of them rated themselves as much lower than average and only 1.8% said they were lower than average, 32.8% said they were average.

Table 4 shows the relationship between this latter measure of self-concept of ability and whether or not high school graduates continue their education.

TABLE 4
CONTINUATION OF EDUCATION BY COMPARISON OF ABILITY WITH
CLASSMATES

	Comparison of Ability with Classmates		
	Lower than Average to Average	Better than Average	Much Better than Average
Continued Education	45.1%	62.3%	70.9%
Did Not Continue Education	54.9%	37.7%	29.1%
Total Number	(268)	(358)	(148)

As can be seen from Table 4, the higher the self-concept of ability, the greater the likelihood of continuing education. Only 45.1% of those who considered themselves low or average continued their education. This compares to a 70.9% continuation rate among those who thought that they were much better than average in comparison to their peers.

We also wanted to determine whether or not high school guidance counsellors were having any influence on the decision to continue education. Our results indicated that graduates who had talked to a guidance counsellor in grade 12 were more likely to continue their education than those who hadn't. However, both those who had found this talk helpful and those who said it was not helpful were equally likely to continue their education.

This pattern of results suggests that the decision to continue education is made before seeking the advice of a guidance counsellor, and that graduates who have already decided to continue their education are more likely to see a counsellor. This interpretation is supported by the finding that only 7.7% of those who

continued their education checked off "high school teachers or counsellors thought it was a good idea" as a factor important in their decision to continue their education. None of those who continued their education gave this factor as the most important reason for continuing their education.

In contrast, matriculation status, type of diploma, and grades all had significant influences on the likelihood of continuing education. The influence of matriculation status and type of diploma were similar. This is not surprising since these two variables are highly related to each other. We found that 77.1% of matriculants continued their education, as compared to only 36.6% of non-matriculants. Similarly, 72.7% of graduates with advanced diplomas continued their education, while only 32.6% of those with general diplomas did so. We also found that the higher the students' high school grades, the more likely they are to continue their education.

TABLE 5
CONTINUATION OF EDUCATION BY GRADE 12 GRADES

	Overall Grade 12 Average			
	50-59%	60-64%	65-69%	70% & Over
Continued Education	33.9%	35.1%	45.5%	78.6%
Did Not Continue Education	66.1%	64.9%	54.5%	21.4%
Total Number	(59)	(154)	(187)	(369)

As can be seen from Table 5, the real increase in the percentages continuing their education occurs once grades reach 70% and over. Only 45.5% of those with grades in the 65-69% range continued their education, this increases to 78.6% among those with grades that are 70% or better. This is not surprising since a

Grade 12 average of 70% is the required minimum for entrance to the University of Alberta and to many quota programs at all of the universities. This relationship between grades and participation in post-secondary education will be discussed further when we consider the type of institution students attended.

As was done in the previous section with demographic characteristics, we checked the relationships we identified between continuing education and academic background factors to see if they held separately in each region, for both matriculants and non-matriculants, and for both males and females. We found that the effects of respondents' plans in Grade 12, self-concept of ability, matriculation status, type of diploma, and grades held in all three regions. As with the total sample, classmates' plans were not related to the continuation of education.

When we examined matriculants and non-matriculants separately we found that the effects of plans in Grade 12, grades, and type of diploma held for both groups, although the relationship with type of diploma was much stronger among matriculants. In the case of self-concept of ability, the pattern of the relationship held for both matriculants and non-matriculants. However, the differences in the likelihood of continuing education among those with different levels of self-concept were not large enough to be considered significant when matriculants and non-matriculants were considered separately. Finally, the relationships between plans in Grade 12, self-concept of ability, matriculation status, type of diploma, and grades held for both males and females.

b) Respondents' Perceptions

In addition to looking at demographic and academic factors which influence whether or not people continue their education, we also examined the respondents' own perceptions of which factors were important in the decision to continue their education. This is an often neglected area in inquiries into post-secondary participation rates. Most research concentrates on external factors which are related to continuing education at the expense of a consideration of the reasons given by the participants themselves.

Table 6 presents a list of the factors selected as being the most important in students' decisions to continue their education, along with the percentages of graduates selecting them.

TABLE 6
FACTORS IN THE DECISION TO CONTINUE EDUCATION

Factors Selected as Most Important (N = 449)	Percent
It is necessary in order to have the career I have chosen	39.6%
It would improve my chances of finding a job	23.2%
I simply wanted more education	13.4%
Parents or relatives wanted me to continue	5.3%
Taking a break between high school and post-secondary education would not be wise	4.2%
Other reasons (Respondents gave their own reasons)	4.0%
I was encouraged by my high marks	3.8%
I like school	3.1%
I didn't want to work for a living right away	1.6%
I was accepted by the post-secondary institution of my choice	1.3%
I could not find a job	0.2%
I had no family obligations that would interfere	0.2%

As can be seen from Table 6, the two most common factors identified as important in the decision to continue education are career/job related. While

almost no one said that they were continuing education because they couldn't find a job, large percentages of graduates said they continued their education to improve the chances of finding a job or to make entrance into a specific career possible. This indicates that those who continue their education are well aware of the limited nature of the labour market for those with only a high school education and assume that post-secondary education will give them a competitive advantage.

The third most common factor identified as important in the decision to continue education ("I simply wanted more education") is very different from the first two. It indicates a belief in the value of higher education for its own sake. Therefore, although some students see post-secondary education as a means to labour market success, others view it as an end in itself. A final point to note about the respondents' perceptions of why they continued their education is that they were very consistent across different groups of graduates. The three most common factors identified as important in the decision to continue education were the same for students in all three regions, for matriculants and non-matriculants, and for males and females.

B. Those Who Don't Continue Their Education Following High School Graduation

1. What is the major activity of those who are not currently participating full-time in post-secondary education?

In order to fully understand participation in post-secondary education it is also necessary to be aware of the alternatives to participation. In this section we examine the major activity of those graduates who didn't continue their education on a full-time basis. Clearly, the most common alternative to post-secondary education is employment. A full 73.7% of the graduates who didn't continue their education were in paid employment or self-employment. Another 7.0% were unemployed and actively seeking employment. Only 1.5% indicated that they were

not presently in the labour force (unemployed and not looking for work).

Another 9.8% of the graduates who didn't continue their education had indicated that their major activity consisted of returning to high school. However, this percentage actually underestimates the extent to which graduates return to high school because it represents the percentage of those who didn't continue their education who listed this as their major activity. When we look at the actual percentage who were attending a high school at the time of the survey, we find that 25.2% of those who didn't go on to post-secondary education had returned to high school. Since all of these people are high school graduates, this percentage represents people who are either repeating courses, taking additional courses, or upgrading from general to advanced diplomas.⁴ The remaining 8.0% of those who didn't continue their education gave "other" activities as their major activity. Often these "other" responses were combinations of the previously mentioned ones (e.g., returned to high school and paid employment).

Two other points about the alternatives to full-time participation in post-secondary education are worth noting. First, there is a great deal of congruence in the major activities of those who didn't continue their education. There were no significant differences in the percentages of respondents in various major activities across all three regions, for matriculants and non-matriculants, and for either sex. Second, part-time participation in post-secondary education is not a common alternative among recent high school graduates. Only 9.6% of those who didn't continue their education full-time reported part-time attendance at a post-secondary institution. Furthermore, the incidence of part-time participation in post-secondary education does not vary by region, matriculation status, or gender. When we broaden our consideration of part-time participation to

⁴ The incidence of taking additional courses and repeating high school courses will be considered further under the section on accessibility.

the total sample, we discover that only 4.0% of recent Alberta high school graduates opt for this route into higher education.

2. Do non-continuing graduates plan to participate full-time in post-secondary education at some point in the future?

Estimations of participation rates in post-secondary education must not only take into account the rate of entry directly following high school, but need also to consider future participation among those who don't enter post-secondary institutions immediately following high school. The results of our survey indicate that delayed entry into higher education may be becoming a more common occurrence. Of those who didn't continue their education following high school, 57.9% indicated that they would definitely continue sometime in the future and another 20.4% said that they would probably do so. This means that over three-quarters (78.3%) of those who didn't continue their education right after high school intend to do so at some point in time.

Furthermore, the likelihood of planning to continue education in the future was significantly related to region and matriculation status. Those who graduated from high school in either of Alberta's major centres were more likely to plan to enter post-secondary education in the future than were graduates from other areas in Alberta. We found that 83.3% of those in the Edmonton area and 83.9% from the Calgary area planned to pursue higher education in the future. This compares to only 69.4% with such plans in other areas of Alberta. Among matriculants, 92.5% had plans to enter post-secondary education in the future, while only 72.7% of the non-matriculants did. A final point to note is that among those graduates who planned to pursue post-secondary education in the future, the majority (64.8%) thought that they would do so within one year and another 29.3% planned to do so within three years. Thus, while delaying entry into higher education is not uncommon, few plan to prolong this delay for extended periods of time.

PART II
PROGRAMS AND INSTITUTIONS

In Part I we examined the overall participation rate in post-secondary education among recent Alberta high school graduates. Several factors were found to be related to the likelihood of high school graduates participating in higher education. This section presents a similar analysis, but examines only those graduates who entered post-secondary education on a full-time basis. Here, we look at the factors influencing the program choices and the type of institutions attended by these students.

A. Institution

1. What post-secondary institutions do recent Alberta high school graduates attend?

Beyond knowing the overall participation rate in post-secondary education, it is also necessary for educational planners to be able to estimate the demand for education in various types of institutions. Alberta's post-secondary system provides a very broad range of choices to prospective students. The options available include universities, public colleges, private colleges, technical institutes, vocational centres, hospital-based schools of nursing, bible colleges and other types of religious institutes, and private vocational schools.

Since post-secondary institutions in Alberta are so numerous, it is difficult to accurately estimate the attendance in each of them with survey data based on only a sample of the population of recent Alberta high school graduates. In order to examine where recent high school graduates go for their post-secondary education it is much more useful to look at the types of institutions attended, rather than at individual institutions themselves. This will produce a much more accurate estimate of the institutions entered by the population of recent Alberta high school graduates.

Table 7 presents a summary of the type of institutions attended by the 1988 high school graduates who continued their education. The institutions have been grouped into

four types: university; college; other; and out-of-province.⁵

TABLE 7
TYPE OF INSTITUTION ATTENDED

Type of Institution (N = 443)	Percent Attending
University	44.9%
College	39.3%
Other	7.2%
Out-of-Province	8.6%

As can be seen from Table 7, attending a university is the most popular choice among recent Alberta high school graduates. This is followed closely by colleges (including technical institutes). Attendance in other types of post-secondary institutions in Alberta and in post-secondary institutions outside of the province is much less common. It appears that most recent high school graduates who continue their education are opting for traditional types of post-secondary education available through institutions within Alberta. However, it is also important to note the percentage of recent high school graduates who enter post-secondary institutions outside the province, as this will affect projections of future enrolments in Alberta.

2. What factors influence the type of institution graduates attend?
 - a) Demographic and Individual Academic Background Factors

⁵ University includes the University of Alberta, The University of Calgary, and The University of Lethbridge. College includes all public and private colleges and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. Other includes Alberta vocational centres, hospital-based schools of nursing, religious institutes, and private vocational schools. Out of province includes all types of post-secondary institutions outside of Alberta.

As was done with participation in post-secondary education, we examined the type of institution attended for its relationship with a number of demographic and individual academic background factors. We were interested in discovering what factors are related to the likelihood of attending a particular type of post-secondary institution. We found a number of factors to be significantly related to the type of institution attended. The following analysis summarizes the relationship between these factors and the type of institution attended.

i) Demographic Characteristics

Once again, the demographic characteristics we examined included region, age, and gender. We found that gender was not related to the type of institution attended, that is males and females were equally likely to be attending each type of post-secondary institution.

However, both region and age were significantly related to the type of institution attended. Table 8 shows the pattern of the relationship with region.

TABLE 8
TYPE OF INSTITUTION ATTENDED BY REGION

	Region		
	Edmonton Area	Calgary Area	Other Alberta
University	50.0%	58.3%	27.4%
College	31.5%	28.8%	56.1%
Other	9.2%	3.8%	8.9%
Out of Province	9.2%	9.0%	7.6%
Total Number	(130)	(156)	(157)

As can be seen from Table 8, graduates from the two major centres are more likely to attend universities than are graduates from other areas of Alberta. Calgary had the highest

percentage of its graduates attending university. Graduates from other areas of Alberta are more likely to have entered college. This relationship between region and type of institution attended holds separately for males and females and matriculants and non-matriculants.⁶ However, among non-matriculants the difference between Edmonton and Calgary in the percentages attending university are much more pronounced (12.9% in Edmonton and 34.0% in Calgary), and almost none (2.0%) of the non-matriculants from other areas in Alberta attend university. The reason for this regional difference is not readily apparent.

Age was also significantly related to the type of institution attended. The form of this relationship is shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9
TYPE OF INSTITUTION ATTENDED BY AGE

	Age	
	Youth 17 - 18 years	Adults 19 years and over
University	48.6%	24.2%
College	36.2%	54.5%
Other	5.9%	15.2%
Out of Province	9.2%	6.1%
Total Number	(370)	(66)

⁶ Throughout this section, when controls for region, matriculation status, and gender are introduced, the type of institution was collapsed into two categories in the analysis: Alberta universities; and all other institutions. The latter category consists mainly of college and technical institute students since few people attended "other" types of Alberta institutions or went out of province. The purpose of collapsing the type of institution into two categories is to obtain large enough numbers to allow for comparisons among subgroups of graduates.

As can be seen from Table 9, youth are twice as likely as older graduates to attend university after graduating. Almost half of the younger graduates (48.6%) were in university. This compares to only 24.2% of the adults. College and other types of Alberta institutions are more popular among older graduates.

The pattern of this relationship holds for both males and females, and among graduates in all three regions of Alberta. However, the relationship was not quite strong enough to reach statistical significance in the Edmonton area. Finally, the pattern of this relationship holds only among matriculants, but as with the Edmonton area, the relationship was not strong enough to reach statistical significance. There is no relationship between age and type of institution attended among non-matriculants.

ii) Individual Academic Background Factors

The academic background factors that we examine in this section include the graduates' self-concept of ability, matriculation status, type of high school diploma, and Grade 12 grades. As expected, all of these factors were significantly related to the type of post-secondary institution attended. Table 10 shows the relationship with self-concept of ability. The measure used to assess self-concept is the respondent's comparison of their ability with that of their Grade 12 classmates.

TABLE 10
TYPE OF INSTITUTION ATTENDED BY
COMPARISON OF ABILITY WITH CLASSMATES

	Comparison of Ability with Classmates		
	Lower than Average to Average	Better than Average	Much Better than Average
University	27.1%	45.0%	63.7%
College	57.6%	38.6%	20.6%
Other	8.5%	8.2%	3.9%
Out-of-Province	6.8%	8.2%	11.8%
Total Number	(118)	(220)	(102)

As can be seen from Table 10, the higher the self-concept of ability, the greater the likelihood of attending university. Only 27.1% of those with low to average self-concept of ability entered Alberta universities. This compares to 63.7% of those who thought that they were much better than average in comparison to their peers. The pattern of the relationship between self-concept of ability and type of institution attended holds for males and females, for matriculants and non-matriculants, and in all three regions. However, in the Edmonton area and among non-matriculants the strength of the relationship just missed the level necessary for statistical significance.

Not surprisingly, matriculation status was also strongly related to the type of institution attended. In Alberta a high school matriculation program is usually the choice of secondary students who plan on entering university level programs after graduation.

TABLE 11
TYPE OF INSTITUTION ATTENDED BY MATRICULATION STATUS

	Matriculation Status	
	Matriculant	Non-Matriculant
University	56.9%	16.7%
College	29.9%	61.4%
Other	4.2%	14.4%
Out of Province	9.0%	7.6%
Total Number	(311)	(132)

As can be seen from Table 11, matriculants are much more likely than non-matriculants to attend university. Conversely, non-matriculants are more likely than matriculants to be in colleges or other types of Alberta institutions. The influence of matriculation status on the likelihood of attending university versus other types of institutions holds for all three regions in Alberta and for both males and females.

The influence of the type of high school diploma on the type of institution attended is very similar to that of matriculation status. This is not surprising since self-reported type of diploma is highly correlated with matriculation status as calculated by Alberta Education. We found that only 13.9% of those reporting general diplomas attended university versus 53.4% of those post-secondary students with advanced diplomas. Once again, this relationship held among all three regions and for both males and females. The relationship also held among non-matriculants, but was not present among matriculants.

Finally, Grade 12 grades were significantly related to the type of post-secondary

institution attended. The form of this relationship is shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12
TYPE OF INSTITUTION ATTENDED BY GRADE 12 GRADES

	Overall Grade 12 Average			
	50 - 59%	60 - 64%	65 - 69%	70% and over
University	10.0%	7.8%	17.6%	62.7%
College	60.0%	74.5%	61.2%	24.3%
Other	20.0%	13.7%	8.2%	4.9%
Out-of-Province	10.0%	3.9%	12.9%	8.1%
Total Number	(20)	(51)	(85)	(284)

The real effect of grades on the type of institution attended is seen once grades reach 70% and over. Those with grades less than this level are more likely to attend colleges or other types of Alberta institutions. Among those students with grades 70% or better, 62.7% of them are attending university. Only a small proportion of those with lower grades are attending Alberta universities. However, many of the graduates with grades less than 70% may actually be in university level programs, since colleges will accept these students into their university transfer programs.

The influence of grades on the type of institution attended holds for students in all three regions, for matriculants and non-matriculants, and for both males and females. Although the relationship confirms what would be expected, the strength of this relationship is probably due, in part, to recent policy changes made by some of Alberta's post-secondary institutions. For example, as of the 1988-89 academic year, a Grade 12 average of 70% has become the minimum standard for acceptance into the University of Alberta. In

addition, many quota programs at the universities have also had entrance requirements higher than the basic minimum requirement at the institution for some time.

b) Respondents' Perceptions

In addition to examining demographic and academic factors which influence the type of post-secondary institution attended, we were also interested in the respondents' own perceptions of the factors important in their choice of a particular post-secondary institution. Table 13 presents a list of the factors selected as being the most important in the choice of post-secondary institution, along with the percentages of students selecting them.

TABLE 13
FACTORS IN STUDENTS' CHOICE OF INSTITUTION

Factors Selected as Most Important (N = 446)	Percent
The program I wanted was offered there	26.5%
It has a good reputation and/or facilities	20.9%
It was close to home	20.6%
I couldn't afford to go to any other institution	5.6%
Other reasons (Respondents gave their own reasons)	5.6%
It is a relatively small institution	4.7%
My application was not accepted by the institution that was my first choice	4.3%
The qualifications for acceptance were lower	3.8%
A suggestion by my parents or relatives	1.8%
My friends were going to this institution	1.6%
The tuition fees were lower	1.3%
Teachers or counsellors suggested this institution	1.1%
It was far from home	0.9%
The qualifications for acceptance were higher	0.7%
It is a relatively large institution	0.4%
It had student residences	0.2%

The reasons given for choosing a particular institution indicate that students are making decisions based on academic concerns. Two of the

most important factors in the choice of institutions were program availability and a good reputation and/or facilities. Students also place importance on the institution's proximity to home. These three top ranking factors in institutional choice prevailed in all three regions, for matriculants and non-matriculants, for males and females, for youth and for older students, and among those who went on to universities and those who went on to colleges (including NAIT and SAIT). The only discrepancy occurred among students attending other types of Alberta institutions and out-of-province institutions. For these students, "other reasons" replaced proximity to home in the top three factors important in the choice of institution.

B. Program

Post-secondary educational program or field of study is an important determinant in later educational outcomes. The choice of a program of study is often the first step in the path towards a specific career. In any case, the programs students select serve to outline the opportunities that will be available to them in the future, both in terms of the labour market and in any further educational endeavors. As such, it is important to understand the reasons propelling students towards a particular program of study.

Table 14 presents a list of factors students selected as being most important in their choice of program, along with the percentages of students selecting each factor as the most important.

TABLE 14
FACTORS IN THE CHOICE OF PROGRAM

Factors Selected as Most Important (N = 445)	Percent
Personal interest	45.8%
It prepares me for the career that I want	22.9%
It would help me get a high paying job	6.5%
It would help my career more in the long run	5.8%
It fitted in well with my academic background	4.7%
It would help me get a job quickly	3.1%
I was not accepted into my first choice for a program of study	2.7%
Other reasons (Respondents gave their own reasons)	2.2%
I entered this program because I was undecided about my career and/or program of study ⁷	2.2%
A suggestion by my parents or relatives	1.6%
It was less difficult than others I was interested in	1.6%
A suggestion or idea of a friend	0.4%
It was less expensive than others I was interested in	0.2%

As can be seen from Table 14, the factor most commonly chosen as having been the most important in the choice of program was the student's own personal interest. Almost half of those who continued their education gave this as the most important reason for their choice of program. This suggests that outside sources are less influential in student's choice of program. For example, only 1.6% of those who continued their education said that the most important factor in their choice of program was a suggestion by their parents or relatives, and none said that it was a suggestion by a teacher or counsellor.

Since personal interest in the field of study has such a strong influence on the program choices of many students, there will probably always be a higher demand for certain

⁷ This response was specified by students who responded in our "other" category. Rather than code this as "other", we decided to preserve the information contained in the response by coding it in its own category. Most of those who were undecided about their career or program indicated that they were in general programs.

programs with broad bases of appeal. Unfortunately, this high program demand does not always translate into a high labour market demand for graduates of these programs. However, the positive side of entering programs based on interest, assuming that the choice is well-informed, is that this interest should translate into academic success for many students.

The second most common factor identified as important in program choice was the fact that a particular program prepares the student for the career that they want. This parallels our earlier observation that the choice of a program of study is often the first step in the path towards a specific career. This is not to say that all students at this stage have decided on a career, but for those who have, choosing a post-secondary program is a means of working towards that goal. A final point to note is that personal interest and career preparation were the top two most important factors in program choice in all three regions, for both matriculants and non-matriculants, for both males and females, and among Alberta university students and students of other institutions.

C. Multiple Applications

In addition to being aware of actual participation patterns in various types of post-secondary institutions and programs, educational planners would often like to estimate the incidence of multiple applications to both institutions and programs. Since students can in most cases enter only one institution and one program, multiple applications can serve to inflate estimates of the demand for post-secondary institutions and programs. This section of our report examines the incidence of multiple applications among high school graduates who are presently enrolled full-time in post-secondary education.

1. How many students applied for admission to more than one post-secondary institution in Alberta?

We found that 28.8% ($N = 130$) of those who continued their education full-time had applied to more than one Alberta institution. This is almost twice the rate found

(13.8%) in the "1986 Study of Multiple Applications", also conducted by Alberta Advanced Education. However, the 1986 study considered all new applicants to post-secondary institutions in Alberta. In contrast, the present study focuses on only a sample of the recent high school graduates who actually enrolled in a post-secondary institution in Alberta or elsewhere. It may be the case that recent graduates are more likely than others to make multiple applications, or perhaps applicants who actually enter post-secondary institutions are more likely to have made multiple applications than applicants who end up not attending. Another possible explanation for the higher incidence of multiple applications in this survey is that the qualifications for entrance into some Alberta institutions have become more stringent since that time.

2. What factors are related to multiple institutional applications?

In order to further explore the incidence of multiple institutional applications, we sought to identify factors which may have an influence on the likelihood of having applied to two or more institutions. Two sets of variables were examined: demographic characteristics and academic factors.

- a) Demographic Characteristics

Three demographic factors were examined for their relationship with multiple institutional applications. These factors were region, age and gender. Of the three, only region was found to have a significant influence on the likelihood of high school graduates having applied to more than one Alberta post-secondary institution.

TABLE 15
MULTIPLE INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATIONS BY REGION

	Region		
	Edmonton	Calgary	Other Alberta
Applied to more than one Alberta Institution	26.3%	22.8%	36.9%
Did Not Apply to more than one Alberta Institution	73.7%	77.2%	63.1%
Total Number	(133)	(158)	(160)

As can be seen from Table 15, multiple institutional applications were more common in other areas of Alberta (36.9%) than they were in either Edmonton (26.3%) or Calgary (22.8%). Perhaps this relates to the finding (Part III) that those in "Other Alberta" are less likely to have a post-secondary institution in the area of their parent's home. If one has to leave home to attend a post-secondary institution, then several alternatives may be equally as attractive. In the case of age, more older students than younger students made multiple institutional applications. However, the difference between the two age groups was not large enough to reach statistical significance. Finally, there were no differences in the incidence of multiple institutional applications between males and females.

b) Academic Factors

Self-concept of ability, type of institution, grades, matriculation status, and type of diploma were the academic factors examined for their relationship with multiple institutional applications. Only the first of these was significantly related to the incidence of multiple institutional applications among those who continued their education. The relationship is shown in Table 16.

TABLE 16
MULTIPLE INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATIONS BY SELF-CONCEPT OF ABILITY

	Comparison of Ability with Classmates		
	Lower than Average to Average	Better than Average	Much Better Than Average
Applied to more than one Alberta Institution	35.8%	28.3%	21.0%
Did Not Apply to more than one Alberta Institution	64.2%	71.7%	79.0%
Total Number	(120)	(223)	(105)

As can be seen from Table 16, the lower one's self-concept of ability, the greater the likelihood of making multiple institutional applications. This is not surprising since we would expect those with lower self-esteem to be more apprehensive about the possibility of not being accepted. Multiple applications are a way of increasing one's chances of acceptance into post-secondary education.

We also wanted to examine the relationship between the type of institution students now attend and whether or not they had made multiple applications. Obviously, the application process precedes the type of institution actually attended, so we cannot use the latter to predict the likelihood of multiple applications. However, if we assume that most post-secondary students are in the type of institution that they had originally planned to attend, then it is reasonable to explore whether or not the type of institution has an influence on the likelihood of having made multiple applications. This assumption is reasonable since only 7.5% of high school graduates who continued their education full-time in post-secondary institutions indicated that not being accepted by their first choice institution was a factor important in the selection of the institution they presently attend.

We found that only 24.2% of Alberta university students had made multiple institutional applications. This compares to a rate of 32.8% among those attending other types of Alberta institutions and out-of-province schools. However, the magnitude of this difference just missed the level necessary for statistical significance. A similar result was found with high school grades. Although those with a Grade 12 average of 50-69% were more likely (34.0%) to have made multiple applications than those with grades 70% and over (26.3%), the relationship did not reach statistical significance. There were no differences in the incidence of multiple applications among matriculants and non-matriculants and general and advanced diploma recipients.

3. How many students applied for admission to more than one program of study at the post-secondary institution they now attend?

We found that 14.9% ($N = 67$) of the high school graduates who entered post-secondary education on a full-time basis had applied to more than one program of study at the institution they presently attend. While this percentage is by no means trivial, it is approximately half the rate of multiple applications to institutions. This lower rate of multiple applications is what one might intuitively expect. If students already have strong personal interests or specific career goals, then it is not as easy to satisfy those preferences through a number of programs as it is to do so through attending any one of a number of institutions. Nevertheless, it is also possible that multiple program application has been underestimated by our measure of it in the questionnaire. It is fair to assume that students who gave a second choice of program on their application to an institution would not have considered this to be a multiple program application. We are probably only obtaining an affirmative answer from those who made more than one separate application.

4. What factors are related to multiple program applications?

a) Demographic Characteristics

As was done with multiple institutional applications, we examined multiple program applications by region, age, and gender. In the case of region, we found that multiple program applications were more common among the Edmonton area graduates, and even more so among "other" area graduates, than they were among Calgary area graduates. However, the differences between the three regions were not large enough for the relationship to reach statistical significance. There were no differences in the incidence of multiple program applications among males and females and youth and older students.

b) Academic Factors

Self-concept of ability, type of institution, grades, matriculation status, and type of diploma were all examined for their relationship with multiple program applications. None of them were found to have an influence on the likelihood of having made multiple program applications at the institutions presently attended by these students. It appears that multiple program application is a matter of individual choice, unrelated to the external criteria we examined. However, it must be remembered that the number of students we examined was not large.

PART III
ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Access is a key topic in post-secondary education. The Alberta government has long held the position that all Albertans who are both qualified and interested should have the opportunity to obtain a post-secondary education in Alberta. In other words, any Albertan who has the academic ability and motivation for post-secondary education would be able to find a place somewhere within Alberta's post-secondary system. In order to ensure that this remains possible, it is necessary to constantly be aware of factors which may affect the level of accessibility to post-secondary education in Alberta. This part of our report examines a number of issues which relate to the level of accessibility for recent high school graduates.

A. Are recent high school graduates being accommodated by Alberta's current post-secondary system?

Continued high demand for higher education has meant that the post-secondary system in Alberta has had to continually adapt in order to maintain its level of accessibility. This has been done successfully through a number of initiatives such as the provision of rural equalization grants to students, expansion of programming, and the establishment of Athabasca University, to name only a few. Nevertheless, new challenges are constantly being faced.

Particularly relevant to the timing of our survey are changes in the admission control policies of the University of Alberta and The University of Calgary. Effective for the 1988/89 academic year, the University of Alberta raised its minimum entrance standard to a 70% Grade 12 average for applicants directly from high school. The University of Calgary, space permitting, accepts students with averages of 60% or better. However, they placed a cap on 1988/89 enrolments in order to hold them to the 1987/88 levels. This has served to effectively exclude some of those who by definition were qualified to attend. Changes such as these lead one to consider whether or not recent high school graduates are being accommodated within the present system.

1. What are the reasons given for not attending a post-secondary institution?

The 57.9% of graduates who continued their education on a full-time basis are obviously being accommodated by the post-secondary system, although perhaps not in the program or institution they prefer. Therefore, the most logical place to begin to address questions of accessibility is among those high school graduates who didn't continue their education full-time in a post-secondary program (42.1%). Table 17 presents a list of the factors selected as being the most important in the decision not to continue education on a full-time basis directly after high school, along with the percentages of students selecting them.

TABLE 17
FACTORS IN DECISION NOT TO CONTINUE EDUCATION

Factors Selected as Most Important (N = 320)	Percent
I need a break from school	18.4%
I wanted to earn money	15.9%
Other reasons (Respondents gave their own reasons)	14.7%
I needed to return to high school to improve my grades	14.1%
I had a good job	8.1%
My family and I do not have the money for more education	7.2%
I was unsure of what to do/go into ⁸	6.3%
My grades were low	4.1%
I wasn't accepted by the post-secondary institution that I wanted to go	3.4%
I wanted to travel instead	2.2%
I didn't think more education will help me get a job	1.9%
I didn't like school	1.2%
I have family responsibilities	1.2%
There are personal problems in my family	0.6%
I would have had to travel too far to attend a post-secondary institution	0.3%
I wanted to get married	0.3%

⁸ This response was specified by graduates who responded under our "other" category. Since several graduates wrote in this response we preserved the information in it by coding it in its own category.

As can be seen from Table 17, the two factors most often selected as being the most important in the decision not to continue education are personal choices, unrelated to accessibility. However, a number of students did indicate that they didn't continue their education because they needed to return to high school to improve their grades (14.1%) or because their grades were low (4.1%). Since all of our respondents had grades that were 50% or better, and almost half of them (48%) had grades of 70% or over, all of them are technically qualified for some type of post-secondary education. Nevertheless, the enrolment control policies at Alberta's two largest universities have made direct entry into a university program more difficult in comparison to delayed entry through a university transfer program. Also, the desire to enter quota programs with higher requirements may prompt the concern about grades for many potential students. Nevertheless, only 3.4% of those who didn't continue their education said it was because they didn't get into the post-secondary institution of their choice.

Almost no one (0.3%) said that they didn't continue their education because they would have to travel too far to attend a post-secondary institution, and only 7.2% of those not continuing their education said that not having the money for more education was the main reason in their decision. However, Alberta has provided a number of financial programs such as student loans, rural equalization grants, and provincial scholarships in order to ensure that low socioeconomic status is not a barrier to qualified students. Perhaps, the problem is not one of access to post-secondary education, but one of access to information. These students may be unaware of all the available sources of financing. The issue of access to information is discussed further in the next section.

The reasons for not continuing education were also examined further to see if they were similar for different groups of graduates. Although the ranking of reasons as most important varied somewhat among different groups of graduates, the desire to earn money, the need

for a break from school, and the need to return to high school to get better grades consistently appeared among the most frequently selected factors. These were among the top four reasons for Edmonton area graduates, Calgary area graduates, matriculants, non-matriculants, males, females, youth (17-18 year old graduates), and among those who plan to continue their education in the future. The only discrepancy from this pattern was found among graduates outside the Edmonton and Calgary areas, older graduates (19 years and over), and among those who had no plans to continue their education in the future. Among these three groups, the need for returning to high school in order to improve grades was not among the top four reasons why they did not continue their education.

2. Access to information on post-secondary education.

The availability of accurate and comprehensive information about post-secondary education is a crucial factor in facilitating access to higher education. If potential students are to benefit the most from Alberta's post-secondary system, they must be able to make informed choices. Our survey listed ten possible sources of information about post-secondary education, and asked graduates to indicate which ones they had used. Table 18 presents the percentages of graduates ($N = 780$) using each of the following sources of information.

TABLE 18
USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES ABOUT POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Sources of Information	Percent Utilizing
High School's guidance counsellor	55.0%
Special events such as student orientation days, career days, open houses or visiting guest speakers	43.2%
Parents and family members	40.3%
Friends	33.8%
Publications received from post-secondary institutions	33.3%
One or more of graduate's high school teachers	26.7%
Someone who works in the area in which graduate would like to have a job or career	25.6%
Someone the graduate contacted at a post-secondary institution	16.7%
Advertising	8.2%
It's About Time to Start Thinking About Your Future (A Government of Alberta publication)	6.7%

As can be seen from the percentages in Table 18, graduates use a combination of information sources. High school guidance counsellors were the most utilized source of information about post-secondary education, used by over half of the graduates. This is not surprising since when we asked specifically if graduates had talked to a guidance counsellor about their plans after high school, almost three-quarters (73.7%) indicated that they had. However, of those who had talked to a guidance counsellor, 40.9% said that they had not found it helpful. Thus, while the advice of a guidance counsellor may be frequently sought, the information received is apparently often not useful or appropriate in the graduates' view.

Special events were the next most common source of information about post-secondary education, indicating that these events are serving their purpose. This was followed by parents and family members. The least utilized source of information was the government publication Its About Time to Start Thinking About Your Future. Since this publication provides a good summary

of information about post-secondary education in Alberta, efforts could be made to see that it reaches a wider audience. This advice holds true for most of the information sources. Although our analysis indicates that a broad range of information sources are used by high school graduates, most of them are used by only a minority of graduates. Furthermore, the frequency of usage is not necessarily an indication of the quality of information received. Educators must continue to work toward the goal of providing accurate and comprehensive information to prospective post-secondary students.

3. Sources of Financing Post-Secondary Education

Financial concerns are always a key element in discussions regarding accessibility. The Alberta government's position of providing access for all qualified and motivated Albertans means that financial limitations should not create barriers to post-secondary education. The government has a number of programs available, the most visible being the Alberta and Canada student loan programs, to ensure that students who could not otherwise afford a post-secondary education can access this opportunity.

In order to obtain an indication of how recent high school graduates finance their post-secondary education and related living expenses, we asked those graduates who had continued their education full-time to indicate the sources of financing that they used. Table 19 presents the percentages of those who continued their education ($N=452$) who used each of the following sources of financing.

TABLE 19
SOURCES OF FINANCING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Sources of Financing	Percent Utilizing
Parents or family	71.2%
Savings and Summer jobs	68.6%
Scholarships	44.5%
A student loan	31.9%
Working part-time	27.9%
Government grants, bursaries and allowances	25.0%
A registered educational savings plan	2.2%
Working full-time	0.9%

As can be seen from the percentages in Table 19, students use a combination of sources of financing. Parents or family and the graduates' own savings and income from summer jobs are used as sources of financing by the majority of the recent high school graduates who continued their education full-time in post-secondary institutions. Slightly over one-quarter of these students used income from part-time work as a source of financing. External sources of financing education such as scholarships, student loans, government grants, bursaries, and allowances were used quite frequently, but not nearly to the same extent as the personal resources just mentioned. The incidence of student loans may rise in subsequent years of the student's post-secondary studies. Among students who have spent a year or more in post-secondary education, the incidence of student loans is thought to be over 50%. Finally, almost no one used a registered educational savings plan or full-time work as a source of financing.

With the exception of the last two rarely used sources of financing, we examined each source of financing to see if its usage varied by region, matriculation status, and gender. The use of parents or family as a source of financing showed no variation across these three criteria. In contrast, the use of savings and income from summer jobs varies among region, matriculation status, and gender. Graduates from "other" Alberta areas were more likely (78.3%) than those from either Calgary

(69.6%) or Edmonton (55.6%) to have used their own savings and income from summer jobs to finance their post-secondary education. Matriculants (72.6%) were more likely than non-matriculants (59.3%) to have used this source of financing. Finally, males (74.4%) were more likely than females (64.0%) to have relied on savings and summer jobs.

The use of scholarships, not surprisingly, varied by matriculation status. Matriculants (57.1%) are much more likely than non-matriculants (14.8%) to have relied on scholarships. The use of scholarships as a source of financing did not vary by either region or gender. The use of student loans, government grants, bursaries, and allowances, and income from part-time work did not vary by either matriculation status or gender. However, the use of all of these sources of financing varied by region. Graduates from "other" Alberta (49.1%) were more likely to use student loans than those from Edmonton (27.1%) and Calgary (18.4%). Similarly, "other" Alberta graduates (37.9%) were more likely to rely on government grants, bursaries, and allowances than those from Edmonton (16.5%) and Calgary (19.0%). The increased likelihood relying on external sources of finance among graduates from "other" Alberta is not surprising since it is these graduates who are the most likely to have to sustain higher costs to attend a post-secondary institution. Conversely, graduates from Edmonton (36.8%) and Calgary (31.6%) are more likely to use income from part-time work than are those from other areas of Alberta (16.8%), probably reflecting the broader range of part-time labour market opportunities in large urban centres.

4. High School Upgrading

In previous years, the transition from high school into either post-secondary education or the labour market was a relatively straightforward process. However, in recent years, with the advent of increasing enrolments in post-secondary education and tighter labour market conditions, the transition out of high school has become a longer, less clearcut process than it once was. As mentioned in an earlier section of this report, 10.4% of the graduates

in our sample ($N=780$) were attending a high school at the time of our survey. This result is striking because our sample represents those who completed the requirements necessary to graduate with a high school diploma about six months prior to the survey. Since the focus of our survey is on graduates, our study does not enable us to determine how many of these graduates had prolonged completing the requirements for graduation by attending high school longer than the standard three years.

Furthermore, it is clear that our 10.4% rate among high school graduates is an underestimation of the actual amount of "upgrading" which occurs among those who have already completed their diploma requirements. We found that 23.2% of graduates reported repeating one or more courses to improve their Grade 12 average. In addition, 50.7% of graduates indicated that they had taken additional courses after having completed enough courses for a Grade 12 diploma.⁹ In this section, we examine the phenomenon of high school graduates repeating and taking additional high school courses. In particular, we focus on the relationship between this activity and access to post-secondary education.

a. Repeating High School Courses to Improve Grades

In addition to identifying the overall percentage of graduates who repeat high school courses (23.2%), we also wanted to identify factors which are related to the likelihood of repeating courses. Six variables were examined for possible relationships with the repetition of courses. They include gender, region, matriculation status, type of diploma, grades, and

⁹ The percentages of graduates repeating and taking additional high school courses is higher than the percentage presently attending because many of those who repeated or took additional courses did so prior to getting a diploma or prior to our survey. We know this because of the comments that were offered by many of the graduates alongside the questions about upgrading after diploma requirements had been met. Unfortunately, our results cannot distinguish those who did their upgrading before rather than after receiving their diploma. Either way, the result is that many students are spending extra time in Grade 12.

whether or not respondents continued their education. We found that all of them, except for gender, were significantly related to the likelihood of repeating high school courses after diploma requirements had been met. The relationship with region is shown in Table 20.

TABLE 20
REPETITION OF HIGH SCHOOL COURSES BY REGION

	Region		
	Edmonton Area	Calgary Area	Other Alberta
Repeated Courses	32.1%	23.1%	15.6%
Did Not Repeat Courses	67.9%	76.9%	84.4%
Total Number	(246)	(251)	(282)

As can be seen from Table 20, Edmonton area graduates were the most likely to have repeated courses, followed by Calgary area graduates. Graduates from other areas of Alberta were the least likely to have repeated high school courses. One possible explanation for this result relates to the stringency of the admission policies of major institutions in these areas. Effective for the 1988-89 academic year, the University of Alberta, located in Edmonton, raised its minimum entrance standard from 65% to a 70% grade average for applicants directly from high school. The University of Calgary, although maintaining its minimum acceptance standard at a grade point average of 60%, has placed a cap on 1988-89 enrolments which has served to effectively increase the grade average needed to ensure acceptance.

Matriculation status was also related to the likelihood of having repeated courses. Non-matriculants are more likely (27.9%) to have repeated courses than matriculants (19.0%). Similarly, those with general diplomas were more likely (28.4%) to have repeated courses than were those with advanced

diplomas (20.0%). The relationship with Grade 12 grades is shown in Table 21.

TABLE 21
REPETITION OF HIGH SCHOOL COURSES BY GRADE 12 GRADES

	Grades	
	50-69%	70% and Over
Repeated Courses	32.5%	13.3%
Did Not Repeat Courses	67.5%	86.7%
Total Number	(400)	(369)

Those with Grade 12 averages of less than 70% were more likely to have repeated courses than those with grades that were 70% or better. This is not surprising. All of our results indicate that the less academically qualified (non-matriculants, general diploma recipients, and those with low grades) are the most likely to upgrade after having already completed their diploma requirements. This suggests that high school graduates are aware that they must obtain certain qualifications in order to have their choice of educational and labour market opportunities. Finally, we found that those who did not enter post-secondary education on a full-time basis directly after high school were more likely (33.0%) to have repeated courses than those who entered higher education (16.2%) immediately.

In addition to examining the factors related to the repetition of high school courses, we were also interested in the reasons respondents perceived to best describe why they chose to repeat courses. The reasons identified by those who had repeated courses are listed in Table 22.

TABLE 22
REASONS FOR REPEATING HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

Reason (N=180)	Percent
To improve my chances of being accepted by a post-secondary institution	84.4%
Other Reasons (Respondents gave their own reasons)	12.2%
To improve my chances of getting a job after leaving high school	2.8%
To participate in high school activities for another year	0.6%

It is evident from the results presented in Table 22 that repetition of high school courses is closely related to issues of access to post-secondary education. The vast majority of those who repeated high school courses indicated that they did so in order to make a post-secondary education more accessible by them. This reason was so prevalent, that the percentages of students identifying it as the reason for repeating courses did not significantly differ among males and females, regions, matriculants and non-matriculants, general and advanced diploma recipients, and graduates who did and didn't continue their education full-time in a post-secondary institution. However, grades did have a significant influence on the likelihood of identifying improved chances of getting into a post-secondary institution as the reason for repeating courses. A full 89.1% of those with grades less than 70% gave this as their reason, versus 71.4% of those who had grades of 70% or over. Graduates are very aware of the fact that they need high grades in order to get into the post-secondary institution or program of their choice.

b. Taking Additional High School Courses

Half (50.7%) of the graduates indicated that they had taken additional high school courses, over and above the required number necessary for a diploma. This is over twice the rate found for course repetition. As was done with course repetition, we examined the

incidence of taking additional courses to see if it varied by gender, region, matriculation status, type of diploma, grades, and whether or not respondents continued their education. We found that none of these factors were significantly related to the likelihood of having taken additional courses, except for region. The form of this relationship is shown in Table 23.

TABLE 23
TAKING ADDITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COURSES BY REGION

	Region		
	Edmonton Area	Calgary Area	Other Alberta
Took Additional Courses	45.9%	48.8%	56.6%
Did Not Take Additional Courses	54.1%	51.2%	43.4%
Total Number	(244)	(250)	(281)

As can be seen from Table 23, graduates from other areas of Alberta were more likely to have taken additional courses than those from either Edmonton or Calgary. This pattern is in the opposite direction of that found with the repetition of courses. The reasons for this difference are not readily apparent.

The reasons given for taking additional courses also differed somewhat from those given for repeating courses. The reasons identified for taking additional courses are listed in Table 24.

TABLE 24
REASONS FOR TAKING ADDITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

Reason (N=392)	Percent
To improve my chances of being accepted by a post-secondary institution	60.5%
Other reasons (Respondents gave their own reasons)	28.3%
To improve my chances of getting a job after leaving high school	9.7%
To participate in high school activities for another year	1.5%

As with repeating courses, the most common reason for taking additional courses is to improve chances of being accepted by a post-secondary institution. However, substantially fewer graduates gave this reason for taking additional courses than for repeating courses. The percentages of graduates selecting this reason for taking additional courses did not significantly differ among males and females, matriculants and non-matriculants, general and advanced diploma recipients, those with different grade levels, and among graduates who did and didn't continue their education. However, region was related to the likelihood of identifying improved chances of getting into a post-secondary institution as the reason for taking additional courses. Edmonton area graduates and Calgary area graduates were more likely to give this reason (68.5% and 61.5% respectively) than were those from other areas of Alberta (54.1%). The magnitude of this difference just missed the level necessary for statistical significance.

Overall, it appears that high school upgrading is a fairly common activity among those who have already completed the requirements necessary for a high school diploma. Repetition of courses and taking additional courses appear to be two different phenomenon. Repeating courses is less common but more predictable (is related to more factors) than taking additional courses. Further, the reasons given for repeating courses indicate that it is

directly related to issues of access to post-secondary education, moreso than is taking additional courses. The reasons for taking additional courses show more variation than the reasons for repeating courses.

B. Family Background and Situational Influences on Participation in Post-Secondary Education

This section approaches the issue of access to post-secondary education in a very different manner from the approach just presented. Here we examine the relationship between family background and educational participation. In the past few decades, educational policy makers have sought to ensure that there is equality of opportunity in the educational system. For the most part, this has been achieved. However, educational inequities related to inequality of condition still remain. By this, we mean that because of their background, all students do not enter the educational arena with an equal chance of success. Obviously, educational planners cannot remedy the inequalities which exist in students' family backgrounds. However, they should be aware of how these inequalities can affect educational outcomes.

1. Does family background influence the likelihood of participating in post-secondary education?

a. Continuing Education

As mentioned previously, 57.9% of our sample of recent Alberta high school graduates continued their education full-time in a post-secondary institution. This section examines the influence of family background on the likelihood of continuing one's education. Overall, we found that family background does have a significant effect on the likelihood of entering higher education after high school.

Perhaps one of the most direct ways in which families influence educational activity is through encouragement. We found that family encouragement had a significant influence on the likelihood of graduates continuing their education. Over two-

thirds (69.5%) of the graduates whose families urged them to enrol in post-secondary education, actually did so. This compares to a continuation rate of 54.5% among those who felt their families "maybe" encouraged them, and 34.3% among those whose families did not encourage them to enter post-secondary education. The relationship between family encouragement and continuing education held among Edmonton area, Calgary area, and other Alberta respondents, among matriculants and non-matriculants, and males and females. In each of these groups, respondents who reported receiving encouragement from their families were more likely to enrol in post-secondary education than those who had not.

Having had older siblings who had attended a post-secondary institution was also a positive influence on the likelihood of attending a post-secondary institution. Among those with older brothers or sisters who attended post-secondary institutions, 63.0% went on to post-secondary education themselves. This compares to 38.8% continuing their education among those whose older siblings did not attend post-secondary institutions. As with family encouragement, the relationship with older siblings' education held among Edmonton area, Calgary area, and other Alberta respondents, among matriculants, and among males and females. Among non-matriculants, the difference was not quite large enough for the relationship to be considered statistically significant.

Parents' education was also significantly related to the likelihood of graduates continuing their education. The relationship with mother's and father's education are shown in Tables 25 and 26.

TABLE 25
CONTINUATION OF EDUCATION BY MOTHER'S EDUCATION

	Mother's Education			
	Less Than High School	Completed High School	Some Post-Secondary to College Competition	University or more
Continued Education	47.4%	52.9%	62.6%	74.4%
Did Not Continue Education	52.6%	47.1%	37.4%	25.6%
Total Number	(190)	(157)	(278)	(121)

TABLE 26
CONTINUATION OF EDUCATION BY FATHER'S EDUCATION

	Father's Education			
	Less Than High School	Completed High School	Some Post-Secondary to College Competition	University or more
Continued Education	47.9%	61.5%	54.9%	75.0%
Did Not Continue Education	52.1%	38.5%	45.1%	25.0%
Total Number	(234)	(96)	(235)	(176)

As can be seen from Tables 25 and 26, the likelihood of continuing one's education increases as the level of parents' education increases. The relationships with both mother's education and father's education held for both males and females, among matriculants, and among all three regions. However, the strength of the relationship with mother's education in Edmonton, and with father's education in "other" Alberta did not reach the level necessary for statistical significance. The relationship with father's education in Calgary was significant, but the pattern was notably different. Those who had fathers who had completed high school were just as

likely (80.6%) to continue their education as those whose fathers had university degrees (78.7%). Those with fathers with only some post-secondary to college completion were less likely (54.8%) to continue their education than those whose fathers were only high school graduates. There was no relationship between parents' education and the likelihood of continuing education when looking at non-matriculants alone.

Finally, we examined whether or not the labour force status of parents influenced the likelihood of continuing education. Mothers' and fathers' labour force status were collapsed into two groups comprised of those presently working and those not working. We found that the likelihood of continuing education is not related to either mother's or father's labour force status. This could be due, in part, to the fact that there was little variation in parents' labour force status. Three-quarters (75.2%) of the graduates' mothers were working and almost all (90.2%) of the fathers worked.

b. Type of Institution Attended

We also examined the influence of the same family background variables on the type of institution attended by those graduates who continued their education. Both mother's and father's education were found to be significantly related to the type of institution attended. The form of the relationship with mother's education is shown in Table 27.

TABLE 27
TYPE OF INSTITUTION ATTENDED BY MOTHER'S EDUCATION

	Mother's Education			
	Less Than High School	Completed High School	Some Post-Secondary to College Completion	University Degree or more
University	35.6%	44.6%	48.0%	51.7%
College	48.3%	44.6%	36.3%	27.6%
Other	10.3%	4.8%	8.2%	4.6%
Out of Province	5.7%	6.0%	7.6%	16.1%
Total Number	(87)	(83)	(171)	(87)

As the level of mother's education increases, so does the likelihood of attending an Alberta university. The pattern of the relationship with father's education is similar. However, those whose father's have completed high school are somewhat more likely to be attending university than those whose father's have some post-secondary education but less than a university degree. These relationships were examined further to see if they also held among subgroups of our sample. Surprisingly, in most cases they did not. Despite the use of a two category form of institution attended (Alberta universities, All other) in order to ensure that there were enough cases for comparison, the smaller numbers being examined probably account for the failure to find many statistically significant results among subgroups.

Overall, this section has provided support for the assertion that family background influences post-secondary educational activity. However, the main influence of family background is on the likelihood of whether or not high school graduates continue their education. Once graduates decide to enter higher education, family background has less influence on the type of institution attended. Only

parents' education had a significant influence on the type of institution attended.

2. Does family background have an indirect influence on post-secondary participation via an influence on academic achievement?

In the previous section, we demonstrated that family background is related to post-secondary participation, at least in terms of whether or not students continue their education. However, it is also possible that family background may influence participation in higher education through its influence on academic factors. We have already demonstrated in Part I and Part II of this report that academic achievement influences post-secondary participation. Therefore, if family background has an influence on academic achievement, then it is also indirectly influencing post-secondary participation.

- a. Family Background Influence on Matriculation Status

Results from our previous analysis indicate that matriculants are more likely to continue their education than non-matriculants. Of those graduates who do continue their education, matriculants are more likely than non-matriculants to attend universities. In this section, we examine the relationship between family background and matriculation status. Six family background variables were explored. They include family encouragement, post-secondary participation of older siblings, mother's education, father's education, mother's labour force status, and father's labour force status. All of them, except for the latter two, were significantly related to matriculation status. The labour force status of both parents was unrelated to matriculation status among the total sample, and among males and females and graduates of each region.

In contrast, family encouragement was related to matriculation status. Those whose families encouraged them to attend a post-secondary

institution were more likely (61.6%) to be matriculants than those who felt that their families may have encouraged them (47.0%) or whose families did not encourage them (34.7%) to attend a post-secondary institution. This relationship held in all three regions and among both males and females. Although we were attempting to identify the influence of family encouragement on matriculation status, we have to acknowledge that the relationship undoubtedly works in two directions. Family encouragement to attend a post-secondary institution is in some respects a consequence of the graduate having achieved matriculation status. However, the way in which we examined this relationship assumes that family encouragement to attend a post-secondary institution (or to otherwise achieve academically) occurs over the long-term, and thus influences the likelihood of a student achieving matriculant status.

The post-secondary participation of older siblings was also related to matriculation status. Among those respondents who had older siblings, those with older siblings who had attended a post-secondary institution were more likely (54.7%) to be matriculants than those with older siblings who did not attend a post-secondary institution (35.5%). This relationship held for both males and females. The pattern of this relationship was also present among all three regions. However, it reached statistical significance in Calgary and "other" Alberta only.

The education of both parents was also found to be related to matriculation status. The form of the relationship with mother's education is shown in Table 28.

TABLE 28
MATRICULATION STATUS BY MOTHER'S EDUCATION

	Mother's Education			
	Less Than High School	Completed High School	Some Post-Secondary to College Completion	University Degree or more
Matriculation	40.5%	45.9%	58.3%	72.7%
Non-Matriculation	59.5%	54.1%	41.7%	27.3%
Total Number	(190)	(157)	(278)	(121)

As can be seen from Table 28, the higher the mother's education, the greater the likelihood of being a matriculant. This relationship was observed among both males and females, and among Edmonton area and other Alberta area graduates. The pattern of the relationship was also seen among Calgary area respondents, however, the difference was not strong enough for the relationship to be statistically significant.

The relationship found between father's education and matriculation status was similar and is shown in Table 29.

TABLE 29
MATRICULATION STATUS BY FATHER'S EDUCATION

	Father's Education			
	Less Than High School	Completed High School	Some Post-Secondary to College Completion	University Degree or more
Matriculation	39.7%	55.2%	48.9%	75.0%
Non-Matriculation	60.3%	44.8%	51.1%	25.0%
Total Number	(234)	(96)	(235)	(176)

In general, the higher the father's education, the more likely graduates are to be matriculants.

However, those who had fathers who were high school graduates were slightly more likely to be matriculants than those with fathers who had some post-secondary education, but less than a university degree. This relationship held among males and females, and in all three regions. Overall, as parents' level of education increases, so does the likelihood of graduates having matriculation status. Nevertheless, some post-secondary education among mothers appears to be more of a positive influence than it is among fathers.

b. Family Background Influence on Grades

The influence of family background on Grade 12 grades was examined using the same six variables as in the preceding analysis with matriculation status. As was the case with matriculation status, grades were not related to the labour force status of either parent. In contrast, family encouragement to attend a post-secondary institution was related to grades. Among those who received family encouragement, 52.8% had Grade 12 grades of 70% or better. This compares to 45.5% among those whose families "maybe" encouraged them, and 37.6% among those who did not receive encouragement. Again, as was discussed in the case of matriculation status, this relationship is undoubtedly two-directional. When we examined this relationship further to see if it held in all three regions and among both genders, we found that it was significant only among Calgary area respondents and among females.¹⁰

The post-secondary participation of older siblings was also positively related to grades. Among those graduates who had older siblings, 49.5% of those whose older siblings had attended a post-secondary institution had

¹⁰ When we examined the influence of family background variables on grades among the total sample, we used a four category version of grades: 50-59%, 60-64%, 65-69%, and 70% and over. When we looked at the same relationship among each region and for each gender, we used a two category version of grades (50-69%, and 70% and over) in order to ensure adequate numbers for comparison.

grades of 70% or better. This compares to 37.3% among those whose older siblings did not participate in post-secondary education. When this relationship was examined by region and gender, we found that it held only among Calgary area graduates and among males.

Finally, the higher the level of education held by the graduates' parents, the more likely graduates were to have high grades. Only 35.1% of graduates whose mothers had less than a high school education achieved grade averages of 70% or better in Grade 12. This compares to 65.3% of graduates whose mothers held a university degree. Similar results were found with father's education. The relationship between father's education and grades held in all three regions and among both males and females. This was also the case with mother's education; however, the strength of the relationship missed the level needed for statistical significance among Edmonton area graduates and among males.

It is clear from the preceding analysis that family background has an indirect influence on participation in post-secondary education through its influence on academic achievement. We know that those who achieve matriculant status and have high grades are more likely to continue their education, and are more likely to attend universities. In turn, those whose families place more emphasis on education are more likely to achieve matriculation status and have high grades.

3. Location of Post-Secondary Institutions

The location of post-secondary institutions in relation to potential students' homes has always been a factor in considerations of accessibility to higher education. Considerable efforts have been made to ensure that a post-secondary education is available to people residing in all areas of Alberta. Where educational facilities are not warranted by the population of potential students, programs are in place to ensure that the people living in these areas have access to the education provided by post-secondary institutions elsewhere. Nevertheless, some people are still concerned that

location may inhibit access. In this section of our report we examine the location of post-secondary institutions in relation to the issue of accessibility.

In order to determine the location of post-secondary institutions in relation to the graduates' family home, we asked our respondents if there is a university, college, or technical institute that a person in their family could attend without having to move away from their parents' home. The large majority (78.3%) of respondents indicated that there is an institution that could be attended without leaving their parents' home. Only 21.7% of respondents replied that a member of their family could not attend a post-secondary institution without leaving home. As expected, graduates from the Edmonton area and Calgary area are much more likely to feel that a post-secondary institution could be attended without leaving their parents home (90.6% and 89.6% respectively) than are graduates from other areas of Alberta (57.8%).

These results are not surprising, and, if presented alone, tell us little about accessibility. The important thing to determine is whether or not the location of institutions, in relation to graduates' family homes, influences the likelihood of participating in post-secondary education. We found that it does not. There was no relationship between the location of institutions in relation to the graduates' homes and the likelihood of continuing education full-time in a post-secondary institution. Both those who could attend an institution without leaving their parents' homes and those who couldn't were equally likely to continue their education. Therefore, although respondents who are not from either of Alberta's two largest urban centres are less likely to be able to remain in their parent's home while attending a post-secondary institution, the ability to remain at home makes no difference in the probability of continuing one's education.

**PART IV
CAREER ASPIRATIONS**

Past research has clearly demonstrated that education plays a large role in future labour market outcomes. Education has proven to be the most important factor in the prediction of where people will end up in the occupational hierarchy. Aspiring to a certain career will affect decisions concerning post-secondary education, which will in turn affect labour market outcomes. As such, the career goals of recent high school graduates serve as one indicator of future educational participation and labour market activity.

A. Overall Distribution of the Occupational Aspirations of Recent High School Graduates

In order to obtain an overview of the career aspirations of recent Alberta high school graduates, we asked our respondents to identify the career or occupation that they hoped to have in five years. When a specific occupation or occupational field was given by the graduates, we coded the response into occupational categories which generally correspond to the major group titles in the Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations. When a specific occupation was not listed, the response was coded into categories which we developed. The results are presented in Table 29.

TABLE 30
OVERALL DISTRIBUTION OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Five Year Career Aspirations (N=780)	Percent	
Managerial/Administrative and Related	11.0%	
Medicine and Health	9.6%	
Natural Sciences/Engineering/Mathematics	9.1%	
Artistic/Literary/Performing Arts	7.7%	
Teaching and Related	4.6%	
Service Occupations	4.6%	
Social Sciences and Related	4.0%	
Clerical and Related	3.3%	
Specific	Farming/Horticulture/Animal-Husbandry	1.8%
Occupational	Transport Equipment Operating	1.8%
Goals	Product Fabrication/Assembling/Repair	1.7%
64.9%	Sales Occupations	1.2%
	Forestry and Logging	1.2%
	Sport and Recreation	1.0%
	Construction Trades	1.0%
	Fishing/Trapping and Related	0.5%
	Mining/Quarrying (Inc. Oil and Gas)	0.4%
	Occupations in Religion	0.3%
	Machining and Related	0.1%
Goals which could not be coded into Occupational Categories	7.4%	
Will still be a Student	2.2%	
Listed a Level of Educational Attainment	1.3%	
Own a Business	0.5%	
Housewife		
11.4%	Listed more than one Occupation	7.7%
	Undecided/Don't Know	7.7%
	No Response	3.8%
	Listed Job Characteristics or General Areas	3.3%
	Too Vague to Classify	1.2%

As can be seen in Table 29, the career aspirations of recent high school graduates are quite varied. Nevertheless, although occupational goals are spread across a broad range, some choices are clearly more popular than others. The second important point to note is that not all graduates were

able to give a specific occupational response. Only two-thirds (64.9%) of the graduates gave a response which could be coded into an occupational field. Another 11.4% had plans for the future, but they couldn't be coded into traditional occupational categories. These types of responses included graduates who indicated that they would still be a student in five years, those who planned to attain a certain level of education, those who wanted to own their own business, and those who planned to maintain a household. Finally, 23.7% of graduates gave responses which indicated that they did not have any specific career aspirations. This phenomenon is discussed in the following section.

B. Career Indecision

Career indecision is an often neglected area in research which focuses on career aspirations. Although many studies of career aspirations exist, few acknowledge those who are unable to specify a particular occupational goal. Yet, the results presented here indicate that career indecision is a fairly common phenomenon, characteristic of almost one-quarter of the graduates. Furthermore, this result is not surprising since most recent high school graduates are youth, not having enough life experience to know what types of occupations would appeal to them. Only about 6% of our total sample were older than 19 years when they responded to the survey.

Among the 23.7% (N=185) of graduates who did not have any specific career-related plans, there were several types of responses. Some directly admitted that they were undecided or didn't know what career they would like in five years. Others simply didn't respond at all to the question about future career plans, presumably because they didn't have a specific career in mind. The remainder indicated their indecision more indirectly by listing a number of differing occupations, listing only job characteristics or general areas, or by providing job descriptions that were too vague to be classified into an occupational category.

Rather than ignore those who are undecided about a career, we chose to explore whether or not career indecision is related to certain characteristics of graduates. The characteristics

we examined include region, matriculation status, Grade 12 grades, gender, and whether or not graduates continued their education full-time in a post-secondary institution. For the purpose of this analysis, the responses to the question about career aspirations were grouped into two categories: career plans and career indecision. The career plans group included those who gave a specific occupation (64.9%) and those who had plans which could not be coded into a traditional occupational category (11.4%).

We found that neither region or matriculation status were related to career indecision. Graduates from the Edmonton area, Calgary area, and other areas of Alberta were equally likely to express career indecision. The same was true for matriculants and non-matriculants. Those with grades less than 70% were somewhat more likely than those with grades of 70% or over to be uncertain about a future career. However, the difference was not quite large enough to be considered statistically significant.

In contrast, gender and continuing education were significantly related to the likelihood of expressing career indecision. These relationships are shown in Tables 30 and 31.

TABLE 31
CAREER INDECISION BY GENDER

	Gender	
	Male	Female
Career Plans	80.2%	72.9%
Career Indecision	19.8%	27.1%
Total Number	(359)	(421)

Females are more likely to be undecided about a future career than are males. Despite the fact that females now have a high rate of participation in the labour force, this finding could relate to recent changes in the attitudes of women towards entering non-traditional occupations. Although the gender distribution among various occupations has become much more balanced towards gender equality, most of the changes

have come about through the movement of women into previously male-dominated occupations. Relatively little change has occurred in the numbers of men in stereotypically female-dominated occupations. Since this is the case, one would expect that females would have a harder time choosing a career since many more non-traditional opportunities have opened up to them.

TABLE 32
CAREER INDECISION BY CONTINUATION OF EDUCATION

	Continuation of Education	
	Continued Education	Did Not Continue Education
Career Plans	79.4%	72.0%
Career Indecision	20.6%	28.0%
Total Number	(452)	(328)

As can be seen from Table 31, those who did not continue their education were more likely to express career indecision than those who did. This is what we would expect, since entering post-secondary education is often the first step towards a specific career.

C. Distribution of Career Aspirations Among Occupational Groups for those Graduates with Specific Occupational Goals

In this section of the report, we examine the 64.9% (N=506) of our respondents who gave a specific occupational response to the career aspirations question. Table 32 provides the distribution of career aspirations among those graduates who have decided on a specific career goal. For comparison purposes, the distribution is provided for the total group, males only, females only, for those who continued their education full-time in a post-secondary institution, and for those who did not continue their education.¹¹

¹¹ The percentages in each occupational category in the distribution for the total group differ from the percentages presented for the overall sample in Table 29. This is because the latter percentages were based on all respondents, whereas the percentages in this section of the report are based on

TABLE 33
DISTRIBUTION OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS AMONG OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

Occupational Category	Total	Males	Females	Continued Education	Did Not Continue Education
Managerial/ Administrative and Related	17.0%	23.2%	11.2%	18.0%	15.6%
Natural Sciences/ Engineering/ Mathematics	14.0%	22.4%	6.2%	18.6%	7.6%
Social Sciences and Related	6.1%	2.0%	10.0%	7.5%	4.3%
Occupations in Religion	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	--
Teaching and Related	7.1%	3.3%	10.8%	8.1%	5.7%
Medicine and Health	14.8%	6.1%	23.1%	17.6%	10.9%
Artistic/Literary/ Performing Arts	11.9%	8.1%	15.4%	11.9%	11.8%
Sport and Recreation	1.6%	2.0%	1.2%	1.7%	1.4%
Clerical and Related	5.1%	--	10.0%	5.1%	5.2%
Sales Occupations	1.8%	2.0%	1.5%	1.0%	2.8%
Service Occupations	7.1%	7.3%	6.9%	3.7%	11.8%
Farming/Horticulture/ Animal-Husbandry	2.8%	4.1%	1.5%	2.4%	3.3%
Fishing/Trapping and Related	0.8%	1.6%	--	--	1.9%
Forestry and Logging	1.8%	2.8%	0.8%	1.4%	2.4%
Mining/Quarrying (Inc. Oil & Gas)	0.6%	1.2%	--	0.3%	0.9%
Machining and Related	0.2%	0.4%	--	--	0.5%
Product Fabrication/ Assembling/Repair	2.6%	5.3%	--	1.0%	4.7%
Construction Trades	1.6%	3.3%	--	--	3.8%
Transport Equipment Operating	2.8%	4.5%	1.2%	1.0%	5.2%
Number of Respondents	506	246	260	295	211

only those graduates who had specific career aims which could be coded into a traditional occupational category.

As can be seen from Table 32, Managerial and Administrative occupations were the most popular choice among the total group. This was followed by Medicine and Health, and Natural Sciences, Engineering and Mathematics occupations. All three of the top choices of occupational field were more popular among those who continued their education, reflecting the fact that in most cases a post-secondary education is a prerequisite for occupations in these fields. Even so, a fair number of those who didn't enter post-secondary education hoped that they would be in Managerial or Administrative occupations in five years time.

The top three choices of occupational field were also characterized by gender differences. Twice as many males as females were aiming for Managerial or Administrative positions, and over three times as many males as females were aiming for occupations in the Natural Sciences, Engineering, or Mathematics. The situation was reversed for occupations in the field of Medicine and Health. Almost four times as many females as males were aiming for occupations in this field, probably because of the perpetuation of nursing as a female occupational choice.

In addition to gender differences and differences among those who continued their education and those who didn't, the career aspirations of these graduates also differed from the actual distribution of occupations in the paid Canadian labour force. For example, in December, 1988, when our survey was conducted, only 3.7% of all paid workers in the labour force were in occupations in the Natural Sciences, yet 14.0% of the graduates who held career goals were aspiring to occupations in this field. In contrast, 17.9% of paid workers in the Canadian labour force were in Clerical occupations in December of 1988, yet only 5.1% of the graduates were aiming for these jobs (Statistics Canada, The Labour Force. Catalogue 71-001. December, 1988. Table 14).

The differences between the career aspirations of recent Alberta high school graduates and the distribution of occupations in the paid Canadian labour force highlights the real possibility that many of these graduates may not attain their original occupational goals. In this sense, the goals

of recent high school graduates appear unrealistic. This is consistent with most past research on occupational aspirations which has found that youth, as a group, tend to aim much higher than the actual occupational structure can accommodate. However, even though the aspirations of some may eventually be modified, at a young age these high aspirations may be valuable in motivating people to achieve to the best of their abilities.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLING AND RESPONSE RATES

**TABLE A.1
POPULATION AND ORIGINAL SAMPLE SIZE BY STRATA**

Area	Matriculation Status	Sex	Strata	Population Size	Original Sample Size
Edmonton Area (C.D.11)	Matriculants	M	A	1,781	102
		F	B	1,863	106
	Non-Matriculants	M	C	1,739	99
		F	D	1,771	101
Calgary Area (C.D.6)	Matriculants	M	E	1,545	88
		F	F	1,619	92
	Non-Matriculants	M	G	1,630	93
		F	H	1,917	109
Other Alberta	Matriculants	M	I	1,679	96
		F	J	1,991	114
	Non-Matriculants	M	K	2,128	122
		F	L	2,242	128
		TOTAL		21,905	1,250

The original size of the subsamples selected in each of the twelve strata reflect the proportion of that group in the total population. However, the actual sample size obtained in each strata differs slightly from the above due to those we could not locate (49 returned to sender) and those who should not have been in the sample (2 were not 1988 graduates, 1 was deceased). Also, the adjusted sample size in each strata reflects changes due to 15 known errors in our sample caused by a small number of errors in the postal code list that was used to determine the census division of the high schools that students graduated from. Nevertheless, the adjusted sample sizes do not differ markedly from the original sample sizes based on the actual proportion of the population of graduates in each of the twelve groups.

TABLE A.2
RESPONSES RATES BY STRATA FOR UNADJUSTED AND ADJUSTED SAMPLE SIZE

Strata	Original Sample Size	Adjusted Sample Size	Number Returned	Unadjusted Response Rate	Adjusted Response Rate
A	102	99	67	65.7%	67.7%
B	106	99	74	69.8%	74.7%
C	99	94	49	49.5%	52.1%
D	101	96	57	56.4%	59.4%
E	88	86	61	70.5%	70.9%
F	92	92	69	75.0%	75.0%
G	93	90	48	51.6%	53.3%
H	109	106	73	67.9%	68.9%
I	96	92	64	65.6%	69.6%
J	114	107	76	66.7%	71.0%
K	122	117	70	57.4%	59.8%
L	128	120	72	55.5%	60.0%
TOTAL	1,250	1,198	780	62.4%	65.1%

TABLE A.3
COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL SAMPLE PERCENTAGES (BASED ON THE POPULATION OF GRADUATES) AND RETURN PERCENTAGES ON THE THREE SAMPLING CRITERIA OF REGION, MATRICULATION STATUS, AND GENDER

Sampling Stratum	Original Sample Percentages (N=1,250)	Return Percentages (N=780)	Difference
Edmonton Area	32.6%	31.7%	-0.9%
Calgary Area	30.6%	32.2%	+1.6%
Other Alberta	36.8%	36.2%	-0.6%
Matriculants	47.8%	52.7%	+4.9%
Non-Matriculants	52.2%	47.3%	-4.9%
Males	48.0%	46.0%	-2.0%
Females	52.0%	54.0%	+2.0%

APPENDIX B: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS

The Chi square test of independence was the test statistic used to determine if the relationships found in our crosstabulations were statistically significant. The relationships we identified in the report are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level unless otherwise noted. This means that we are 95% confident that the relationships we identified exist in the population of recent graduates, and are not the result of chance due to the particular group we sampled.

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

1988 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE SURVEY

For each question, please indicate your answer with a check mark in the appropriate box.

Your answer to the question below will determine which two of the three sections of this survey you should answer:

Are you presently enrolled full-time in a post-secondary institution?

Yes
No

If your answer is "yes," please complete **Sections 1 and 3** of the survey.

If your answer is "no," please complete **Sections 2 and 3** of the survey.

Please note: A post-secondary institution is any one of the following:

- a university
- a public college
- a private college
- a technical institute
- an Alberta or Community Vocational Centre
- a hospital-based school of nursing
- a religious institute of higher learning
- a private vocational school

SECTION 1

To be answered by students currently enrolled full-time in a post-secondary institution (respondents who answered "yes" to the question on the first page)

1. What is the name of the institution you are now attending?

2. Is it possible for you to live in the same city or town as your parents while attending this institution?

Yes
 No

If "yes", do you still live with your parents?

Yes
 No

3. Do you have a part-time job?

Yes
 No

If "yes", how many hours do you normally work each week?

4 hours or less
 5-10 hours
 11-15 hours
 16-20 hours
 21 hours or more

4. Do you feel your high school courses provided you with the necessary skills or knowledge required to attend a post-secondary institution?

Yes
 No

Please briefly state why you feel this way.

5. What other skills or knowledge would have been useful to learn in high school?

6. Which of the following are helping you to finance the costs of your education and living expenses? (Please check all that are important)

- a Your own savings and summer jobs
- b Scholarships
- c Government grants, bursaries and allowances
- d Your parents or family
- e A registered educational savings plan
- f A student loan
- g Working part-time
- h Working full-time

7. In choosing the post-secondary institution you are now attending, which of the following factors were important? (You may check more than one)

- a A suggestion by my parents or relatives
- b The tuition fees were lower
- c It is a relatively small institution
- d It is a relatively large institution
- e My friends were going to this institution
- f The program I wanted was offered there
- g It was close to home
- h It was far from home
- i It has a good reputation and/or facilities
- j Teachers or counsellors suggested this institution
- k The qualifications for acceptance were lower
- l The qualifications for acceptance were higher
- m My application was not accepted by the institution
that was my first choice
- n I couldn't afford to go to any other institution
- o It had student residences
- p Other (please specify) _____

If you checked more than one, which one of the above was most important?

Print letter here _____

8. Did you apply for admission to more than one post-secondary institution in Alberta?

Yes
 No

9. Which of the following factors were important in your choice of your current program or field of study? (You may check more than one)

a A suggestion by my parents or relatives
 b It was less difficult than others I was interested in
 c A suggestion or idea of a friend
 d Personal interest
 e It would help me get a job quickly
 f It would help me get a high paying job
 g A teacher or counsellor suggested the program
 h It would help my career more in the long run
 i It was less expensive than others I was interested in
 j It prepares me for the career that I want
 k It fitted in well with my academic background
 l I was not accepted into my first choice for a program of study
 m Other (please specify) _____

If you checked more than one, which one of the above was most important?

Print letter here _____

10. Which of the following factors were important in your decision to continue your education after high school? (You may check more than one)

- a Parents or relatives wanted me to continue
- b It is necessary in order to have the career I have chosen
- c I could afford it or there was a good chance of getting a student loan
- d I didn't want to work for a living right away
- e I could not find a job
- f Taking a break between high school and post-secondary education would not be wise
- g I like school
- h It would improve my chances of finding a job
- i High school teachers or counsellors thought it was a good idea
- j I simply wanted more education
- k A lot of my friends were planning to continue their education
- l I was encouraged by my high marks
- m I was accepted by the post-secondary institution of my choice
- n I had no family obligations that would interfere
- o Other (please specify) _____

If you checked more than one, which **one** of the above was most important?

Print letter here _____

11. Did you apply for admission to more than one program of study at the post-secondary institution you are now attending?

- Yes
- No

Please skip Section 2 and continue on by answering the questions in Section 3.

SECTION 2

To be answered by high school graduates not currently enrolled full-time in a post-secondary institution (respondents who answered "no" to the question on the first page)

1. What is your major activity at present?

Paid employment or self-employment
Unemployed but looking for paid employment
Unemployed and not looking for paid employment
Other (please specify) _____

If you are working, how much longer would you like to stay in that line of work?

Less than 6 months
6 months to a year
More than a year
Undecided

2. Do you feel that your high school courses provided you with useful skills or knowledge?

Yes
No

Please briefly state why you feel this way.

3. What other skills or knowledge would have been useful to learn in high school?

4. Are you now a part-time student at a post-secondary institution?

Yes
 No

Are you now attending a high school full-time or part-time?

Yes
 No

5. Do you think that you will someday continue your education on a full-time basis?

Yes, definitely
 Yes, probably
 Not sure
 No, probably not
 No, definitely not

If you answered "yes, definitely" or "yes, probably," how soon after graduation from high school do you think you will continue your education on a full-time basis?

Within 1 year
 Within 3 years
 Within 5 years
 After more than 5 years

6. Why did you **not** continue your education on a full-time basis right after graduation from high school? (**You may check more than one**)

- a Parents or relatives were not in favour of more education
- b Most of my friends were not continuing their education
- c I had a good job
- d I wanted to earn money
- e I didn't think more education will help me get a job
- f My family and I do not have the money for more education
- g My grades were low
- h I need a break from school
- i I didn't like school
- j I wasn't accepted by the post-secondary institution that I wanted to go to
- k I wanted to travel instead
- l I would have had to travel too far to attend a post-secondary institution
- m My teachers or counsellors didn't think I should go
- n I needed to return to high school to improve my grades
- o There are personal problems in my family
- p I wanted to get married
- q I have family responsibilities
- r Other (please specify) _____

If you checked more than one, which **one** of the above was most important?

Print letter here _____

Please continue by answering the questions in Section 3.

SECTION 3

To be completed by all respondents

1. Which of the following are very important to you at this time? (You may check more than one)

- a Developing my abilities to the fullest
- b Getting married
- c Working to improve the quality of life in our society
- d Satisfying my thirst for knowledge
- e Travelling and seeing the world
- f Making a name for myself
- g Becoming well off financially
- h Raising a family
- i Having a good time
- j Finding secure, long-term employment
- k Being successful in my chosen career
- l Other (please specify) _____

If you checked more than one, which one of the above is most important?

Print letter here _____

2. Did you obtain helpful information about post-secondary education from any of the following sources? (You may check more than one)

- a It's About Time to Start Thinking About Your Future
(A Government of Alberta publication)
- b Your high school's guidance counsellor
- c Your friends
- d One or more of your high school teachers
- e Your parents and family members
- f Someone who works in the area in which you would like to have a job or career
- g Advertising
- h Publications you received from post-secondary institutions
- i Someone you contacted at a post-secondary institution
- j Special events such as student orientation days, career days, open houses or visiting guest speakers

3. What career or occupation do you hope to have five years from now?

4. Did your school have information on different occupations?

Yes
 No
 I don't know

5. When you were in Grade 12, what did you plan to do for most of the first year after graduation? **(Answer one only)**

Work
 Continue my education
 Travel
 Other

6. As far as you know, how many of your fellow classmates were going to continue their education after high school?

All of them
 Most of them
 Half of them
 A few of them
 None of them

7. After you completed enough courses for a Grade 12 diploma, did you **repeat** one or more courses that you had taken before to improve your Grade 12 average?

Yes
 No

If you answered "yes," which of the following best describes your reason for doing so? **(Check only one)**

To improve my chances of getting a job after leaving high school
 To improve my chances of being accepted by a post-secondary institution
 To participate in high school activities for another year
 Other (please specify) _____

8. After you completed enough courses for a Grade 12 diploma, did you **take additional courses?**

Yes
 No

If you answered "yes," which of the following best describes your reason for doing so? **(Check only one)**

To improve my chances of getting a job after leaving high school
 To improve my chances of being accepted by a post-secondary institution
 To participate in high school activities for another year
 Other (please specify) _____

9. When you were in Grade 12, did you talk to your guidance counsellor about your plans after high school?

Yes, and I found it helpful
 Yes, but I didn't find it helpful
 No
 Our school didn't have a guidance counsellor

10. What kind of Grade 12 diploma did you receive?

General
 Advanced

What was your overall Grade 12 average?

Below 50%
 50 - 59%
 60 - 64%
 65 - 69%
 70% and over

11. Overall, how would you rate the quality of education that you received in high school?

Very good
 Good
 Fair
 Poor
 Very poor

12. Were the skills and knowledge that you learned in high school useful in making decisions about your immediate future?

Yes
 No

Please briefly state why you feel this way.

13. Did your family urge you to enrol in a post-secondary education program right after finishing high school?

Yes
 No
 Maybe
 I don't know my family's wishes

14. Did any of your older brothers or sisters go to university or any other post-secondary institution?

Yes
 No
 I have no older brothers or sisters

15. What is the highest level of education reached by your parents? (Check only one for each of your parents)

Mother Father

<input type="checkbox"/>	Elementary school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Junior high school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Some high school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete high school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Some college, technical institute or other post-secondary training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Some university
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed college, technical institute or other post-secondary training
<input type="checkbox"/>	University degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 1 university degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know

16. What was the major work activity of your parents in 1988?
(Check only one for each of your parents)

Mother Father

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paid employment or self-employment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed but looking for paid employment
		Unemployed and not looking for paid employment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired
		Other

17. Is there a university, college or technical institute that a person in your family could attend without having to move from your parent's home?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

18. Are you confident in your ability to achieve your education and career goals?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure

19. How would you compare yourself to others that you know of in your Grade 12 class as to your ability to achieve your education and career goals?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Much better than average
<input type="checkbox"/>	Better than average
<input type="checkbox"/>	Average
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower than average
<input type="checkbox"/>	Much lower than average

20. Date of birth:

Day _____, Month _____, Year _____

21. Sex:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female

22. What is the name of the high school you graduated from?

N.L.C. - B.N.C.

A standard linear barcode consisting of vertical black lines of varying widths on a white background.

3 3286 09255844 0